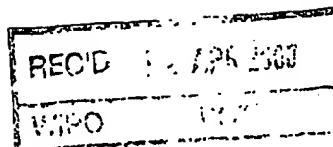
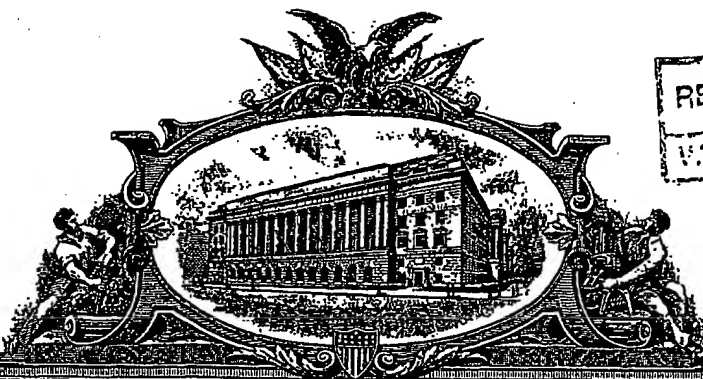


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Docket No.: TFH 99.03
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BOX PATENT APPLICATION
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Dear Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of:

Inventor: Glen Axelrod and Walter Lee
For: FOLDABLE/COLLAPSIBLE STRUCTURE

Enclosed are the following:

- ☐ Letter: SUBMISSION OF INCOMPLETE APPLICATION
- ☒ Specification 16 pages; Claims 3 pages; Abstract 1 page
- ☒ Declaration and Power of Attorney
- ☒ sheet(s) of drawings 6 pages
- ☒ An assignment of the invention to: T.F.H. Publications
- ☐ A verified statement to establish small entity status
- ☐ A certified copy of _____ application No. _____, filed _____
- ☐ Prior Art Disclosure Statement
- ☐ Preliminary Amendment

Priority is hereby claimed under 35 USC 119 by way of _____ patent application
No. _____ filed _____

Benefit is hereby claimed under Title 35, United States Code 119(e) of United States provisional application
No. _____ filed _____

The filing fee has been calculated as shown below:

		SMALL ENTITY	LARGE ENTITY
BASIC FEE:		\$ 380.00	\$ 760.00
TOTAL CLAIMS:	15 - 20 = -0-	x 9 =	x 18 = -0-
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS:	1 - 3 = -0-	x 39 =	x 78 = -0-
MULT. DEPEND. CLAIMS:		+130 =	+ 260 = -0-
TOTAL:		\$	\$ 760.00

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FOLDABLE/COLLAPSIBLE STRUCTURE

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a foldable/collapsible structure, and more particularly to a light-weight animal shelter having excellent thermal insulating features and ease of assembly/disassembly. The shelter can therefore be readily converted into a compact condition for ease of storage and/or transport, and also presents itself in an attractive or classic looking dog-house design when fully deployed.

Prior Art

A fair amount of disclosures have been put forward in recent years, seeking to develop a foldable/collapsible structure primarily for use as an animal shelter. More specifically, a number of pet houses and enclosures have been proposed with the purpose of providing a sleeping area for a pet and for confining a pet, when necessary, for example, when traveling.

However, these structures have all tended to be bulky, of relatively high weight, difficult to move from one location to another, and more importantly, not sufficiently foldable/collapsible for ease of storage and transport. Such prior art designs also have not considered the development of a structure that provides appropriate thermal insulation, to thereby provide the pet with comfortable shelter. In short, to date, existing dog houses have been difficult to construct, take up valuable space in distribution and at retail outlets, are difficult to transport for both the distributor and retailer, are difficult for consumers to

1 transport home or to different locations, and are difficult for consumers to store when not
2 in use.

3 For example, one early attempt at producing a collapsible animal cage is reported
4 in U.S. Patent No. 3,896,766, which discloses a collapsible animal cage formed of
5 rectilinear welded wire fabric. The cage is said to have a front and rear rectangular end
6 wall structure movable between an erected position and a folded position overlying a
7 litter tray on the bottom of the cage, side wall structures intermediately hinged between
8 their tops and bottoms and foldable over the end wall structures, and a top hingedly
9 secured to the top of the side walls therein.

10 U.S. Patent No. 4,903,637 discloses what is termed a "container" to house or carry
11 small household pets, that may be quickly and manually formed between an erected use
12 mode and a flat folded storage mode. The container is of a gable roofed house
13 configuration in its erected mode and comprises an interconnected structure formed by
14 hingeably related rigid planar elements that occupy a relatively small volume in the
15 folded storage mode. Handles carried by the roof provide aid in manual carriage, and
16 releasable fasteners maintain either an erected or storage mode, and an end wall provides
17 a selectively latchable door.

18 U.S. Patent No. 4,576,116 discloses a collapsible A-frame house providing a
19 common site for a cat to rest, exercise and play comprised of a roof of carpet-like material
20 including two integral roof panels with their bottom edges connected to opposing edges
21 of a floor panel also of a carpet-like material. Stiffening panels are affixed onto the

1 backside of the roof panels. A cord with two ends slidably passes through the peak into
2 the house, with cat amusement objects connected to each end. The cord additionally
3 provides a manual handle for lifting the house. Collapsing the house for storage or
4 transport, the house is initially lifted by the cord adjacent the peak. The flexible nature of
5 the floor panels permits an outward folding or buckling of the floor along its longitudinal
6 centerline to thereby completely collapse the house into a folded condition.

7 U.S. Patent No. 4,520,758 discloses an animal house which is particularly
8 adaptable for use with cats. The house is formed of an elongated base adapted to stand
9 substantially vertical and a platform at the upper end of the house to form an animal
10 perch. The base is formed of a single piece of self-supporting material with appropriate
11 fold lines being provided by either areas of weakening or by rigid material at the location
12 of the fold lines or by appropriate hinges to permit folding. The base can be formed of
13 three separate panels folded into a three-sided figure of triangular cross section.

14 U.S. Patent No. 5,078,096 discloses a curvilinear, four-sided pyramidal container
15 for housing and carriage of small household pets. The container provides a flexible fabric
16 cover which defines optionally coverable mesh windows and an optionally coverable
17 openable access door structure. The container carries a rigid bottom insert and is
18 supported by a rod frame having a square, releasably interconnected bottom element
19 formed of four interconnected semi-rigid rods and two arched, resiliently deformable
20 support rods extending upwardly between opposed corners of the structure, all said rods

1 carried in loops defined on the inner surface of the cover. The support rods are
2 selectively removable to allow assembly and collapse of the structure for storage.

3 U.S. Patent No. 5,121,710 discloses a collapsible doghouse to be used indoors or
4 outdoors, to provide a comfortable and easy to clean place for a dog to rest or seek shade.
5 The doghouse includes elongated side walls, a pair of distal walls, one of which includes
6 an arched entranceway and another of which includes a cutout drainage slot, a roof
7 portion, and a weightable base portion, all of which are securely, yet easily removably
8 connected, and are formed of a substantially solid, yet flexible, water repellent plastic
9 which will facilitate easy cleaning and drainage, and lightweight transportation.

10 U.S. Patent No. 5,335,618 discloses a collapsible animal enclosure comprising a
11 house unit with spaced side walls and a roof of pliable material, and opposite ends
12 forming an enclosed area for housing an animal. Support bows extend transversely
13 across the sidewalls and roof for holding the sidewalls and roof in an open, spread apart
14 condition. The house unit can be collapsed between a fully erect condition and a
15 collapsed condition in which the ends are pushed inwardly towards one another,
16 collapsing a pliable material between the ends in an accordion-folded manner.

17 U.S. Patent No. 5,425,681 discloses an animal house, including a cap, a base, four
18 posts and four walls secured together. Both the cap and base include a groove formed in
19 the inner peripheral portion, and the posts each include two slots for engaging with the
20 edges of the walls so as to solidly secure the walls in place. The animal house may be
21 folded into a compact configuration.

1 U.S. Patent No. 5,465,686 discloses a disposable, collapsible pet house foldable
2 from a unitary blank of material received in a flat state, the house being foldable from the
3 blank between a collapsed state for shipping, storage and disposal and an enclosed, erect
4 state for use.

5 U.S. Patent No. 5,564,454 discloses a collapsible structure having front and back
6 ends with front and back support members including a single central support member to
7 pass in direct line along the cover means and thus support the entire structure at roughly
8 the center of the cover means. The item may be sewn and easily manufactured in a
9 fashion so that upon being collapsed it occupies the smallest possible volume and has no
10 overlapping support members.

11 U.S. Patent No. 5,626,098 discloses a collapsible cage for dogs or rabbits
12 comprising a rectangular base, fold-down end walls and folding side walls and a roof.
13 The walls and roof are made of metal grids. The end walls fold down onto the base one
14 over the other. The sidewalls fold in the middle and are hinged at the top to opposite
15 edges of the roof allowing the sidewalls and roof to collapse onto the base over the end
16 walls. The base has a pull out tray and a pan and an access door is provided in one of the
17 end walls. Releasable clips are provided to hold the walls and roof together in an
18 elevated position of the structure.

19 U.S. Patent No. 5,727,502 discloses a collapsible pet home having a base, side
20 walls, end walls and a roof which can be converted into an exercise pen for the pet by
21 folding the end walls down onto the base, setting the base on end, and using the base, side

1 walls and roof to form peripheral walls of the exercise pen. The entire structure is said to
2 fold down into a compact package.

3 U.S. Patent No. 5,669,331 discloses a pet housing expandable to hold a pet and
4 collapsible to suitcase size for manual transport including a pair of platforms and first and
5 second pairs of spaced walls. The walls are pivotally attached at opposite ends of the
6 platform and are hinged at intermediate positions for collapse and expansion.

7 U.S. Patent No. 5,752,470 discloses a collapsible system which can be used for
8 portable pet houses, as well as for emergency housing in times of disaster. When using this
9 system, the structure will collapse by pushing in the sides from the middle, and by letting
10 the front and back fold onto each other.

11 U.S. Patent No. 5,769,028 discloses a pet carrier including a main and insert unit.
12 The main unit defines a carrying space having a closed bottom and four sides, one of
13 which has an opening therethrough large enough to permit an animal to enter the space
14 through the opening. The insert unit has a closed top, four sides, and an open bottom.
15 After the animal has entered the main unit, the insert unit is lowered down into the main
16 unit to close off the side opening. Then a foldable top closure for the main unit is folded
17 to secure the carrier and form a handle structure for carrying the carrier. Both units are
18 foldable and are structured to provide an enhanced strength carrier.

19 U.S. Patent No. 4,006,8713 discloses a collapsible dog house with two opposite
20 side walls, a front wall, a rear wall, a roof and a floor which are separable components,
21 preferably made of marine plywood. The floor and roof are provided with rectangular

1 skirts. The sidewalls are notched and grooved to interfit with the skirts and front and rear
2 walls. Interlocking means are provided on the two skirts so that when the skirts are in
3 confronting abutment they define the perimeter of a case whose sides are the roof and
4 floor of the dog house.

5 U.S. Patent 4,109,427 discloses a foldable structure considered to be primarily
6 useful as a doghouse. The structure is foldable between an expanded configuration in
7 which parallel sidewalls are connected by a top, a bottom and parallel ends and a folded
8 configuration in which the side walls are adjacent to one another. In order to achieve a
9 folding action, the top, bottom and the ends each consists of a set of two parts. The parts
10 of each of these sets extend beyond the sidewalls. A first group of hinges are used to
11 pivotally connect the parts of each of the sets to the sidewalls. The second group of
12 hinges are employed to connect the parts of each set midway between the sidewalls.

13 U.S. Patent No. 4,195,593 discloses a portable pet-house which defines an A-
14 frame, the roof panel of which are pivoted at the top such that they are collapsible into a
15 generally planar, carrying mode, preferably being floor and end wall members carried
16 internally between the roof panels when the unit is in its portable mode.

17 U.S. Patent No. 4,467,572 discloses a collapsible dwelling for animals, including
18 a plurality of elements hingedly joined with each other which when in assembled
19 relationship, cooperatively define an enclosure suitable for pets. All elements are hinged
20 strategically since the elements can be partially disassembled and the aggregate parts

1 stacked one upon the other, for inclusion within a container having a length and width no
2 greater than that of the largest elements.

3 U.S. Patent No. 4,169,428 discloses a sleeping bag for pets formed from a
4 multiple ply padded sheet of deeply quilted material which is normally folded along its
5 central portion with opposite halves in overlying relationship to form lower and upper
6 layers and with the edge portions of each half in alignment with each other.

7 PCT Application No. WO 97/47185 discloses a house for feeding small animals,
8 especially dogs or cats made of a folded section of cardboard or other foldable material
9 with an essentially square lower section forming a bottom and side walls and a roof
10 shaped upper section, where the lower section has an access aperture for the animal. The
11 lower and upper sections are made in one piece from a folded section, where the upper
12 section can be fitted on and secure the lower section where there is at least one removable
13 inlay of corrugated cardboard or another absorbent material covering the bottom.

14 European Patent 0742 999B1 discloses an animal shelter, comprising a box
15 having at least one strip curtain made of elastic material in front of an entrance to the box
16 interior, characterized in that the strips are fastened in a releasable and in particular too-
17 free, exchangeable manner in a clamp mounting which is fastened to the box.

18 Finally, European Patent Application 0 3667 626 A1 discloses a portable folding
19 shelter for domestic animals. The shelter comprises a pair of sidewalls articulated at the
20 top edges thereof to a respective sloping element in turn articulated to a central element, a
21 rear and a front apertured wall articulated to the side edges of the sidewalls and each

1 foldable along a middle vertical line, the roof of the shelter being provided with a
2 withdrawing holding handle.

3 Accordingly, upon extensive review of the prior art noted above, it is apparent
4 that a completely foldable, collapsible structure, suitable as a shelter for a pet, comprised
5 of lightweight material having excellent thermal insulating features and ease of
6 assembly/disassembly, remains generally unavailable. Therefore, it is an object to
7 overcome the disadvantages of the structure noted above, which is more economical to
8 manufacture and purchase, and which can readily be converted into a compact condition
9 for ease of storage and/or transport and also presents itself in an attractive or classic-
10 looking doghouse design when fully deployed.

11 Yet another object of this invention provide a foldable/collapsible structure
12 suitable for a pet which simple to set up, take down and convert from one use to another.

13 *Brief Description of the Drawings*

14 **FIG. 1** is a front-end view of the collapsible/foldable structure of the present
15 invention.

16 **FIG. 2** is a front-end view of the collapsible/foldable structure of the present
17 invention, in a partially collapsed/folded state.

18 **FIG. 3** is a front-end view of the collapsible/foldable structure of the present
19 invention, in a fully collapsed/folded state.

20 **FIG. 4** is a front/side view of the collapsible/foldable structure of the present
21 invention, in a partially collapsed/folded state.

1 As illustrated in FIG. 1, the collapsible/foldable structure of the present invention
2 is shown generally at 10, and comprising sidewalls 12 and 14. Sidewalls 12 and 14
3 contain an upper 16, middle 18 and lower section 20. As can be seen, the sidewalls
4 contain a pivot 22 preferably disposed on the outer surface of the sidewalls 12 and 14,
5 and a pivot 24, preferably disposed on the inside surface of the sidewall, such that when
6 collapsing said sidewalls (see FIG. 2) the upper 16 and middle 18 sidewalls collapse
7 inwardly and towards the bottom platform 26. In addition, upper sidewall 16 is pivotally
8 attached to either roof section 28 and 30 at 17.

9 As also shown in FIG. 1, the collapsible/foldable structure 10 further contains a
10 front wall 29 which preferably defines the front portal opening. Preferably, and as also
11 shown in FIG. 1, the opening is of a portal/circular configuration of the classic pet-shelter
12 or doghouse design. In addition, structure 10 further contains a top roof section
13 comprising two roof sections pivotally attached to one another at 32, so that roof sections
14 28 and 30 can collapse downwardly along said pivotable attachment 32 toward said
15 bottom platform 26.

16 In that regard, attention is directed to FIG. 2, which illustrates the
17 collapsible/foldable structure of the present invention in a partially collapsed state. As
18 illustrated therein, the upper 16 and middle sidewall sections are collapsed and disposed
19 inward in the structure 10 and begin to assume the fully collapsed planar position, best
20 illustrated in FIG. 3. Also, as shown in FIG. 2, preferably, front wall 29, which is
21 pivotally attached to bottom section 26, is also made to collapse inwardly to rest on

1 bottom section 26, and preferably, rear wall 34, which is also pivotably attached to
2 bottom section 26, also collapses inwardly and rests upon front wall 29 when in a fully
3 collapsed state. Those skilled in the art, however, will recognize that it may also be
4 preferable to modify such pivotable attachment to facilitate the resting of front wall 29 on
5 top of rear wall 34, when again, in a collapsed state.

6 In addition, as shown in FIG. 1, front wall 29 may contain, at a section disposed
7 directly beneath pivot location 32, an opening, preferably of semi-circular configuration,
8 to facilitate ventilation of the structure. Such opening can also be optionally placed in the
9 rear wall 34.

10 Attention is next directed to FIG. 3, which illustrates the present invention in a
11 fully collapsed condition. As can be seen in FIG. 3, the interaction of pivot points 17,
12 22, 24, as well as the inward collapse of the front 28 and rear collapsible walls 34 which
13 are pivotally attached to the bottom section 26 provide the unique and previously
14 unavailable ability to collapse the classic pet shelter design illustrated in FIG. 1 into a
15 substantially flat, readily transportable structure.

16 Turning next to FIG. 4, as better illustrated therein, front wall 29 is shown as
17 pivoting inwardly into structure along pivot edge 36. With attention next directed to FIG.
18 5, structure 10 is shown in cut-away view with respect to bottom section 26. More
19 specifically, bottom section 26 preferably contains a hollow section 38 in which sand or
20 other weight or load material can be incorporated, to strategically add weight to the
21 bottom section to facilitate placement stability. In addition, as also shown in FIG. 5, the

1 structure 10 may optionally contain an attached chimney type feature, which in preferred
2 embodiment, is configured to contain a solar-powered fan so that the animal or pet inside
3 shelter 10 is treated to improved ventilation.

4 In addition, in preferred embodiment, it can be appreciated that certain exposed
5 surface of shelter 10 may be vulnerable to chewing and destruction by a pet, and
6 therefore, should preferably be protected from such action by the strategic placement of
7 protection material. In that regard, attention is again directed to FIG. 5, wherein exposed
8 and/or overhanging surfaces 38 of the roof section or front entrance are preferably
9 protected with a layer of material that restricts the ability of the animal to chew on such
10 exposed surfaces and destroy the structure. Accordingly, exposed surfaces are preferably
11 further protected with plastic sheeting materials, including, but not limited to polyolefins,
12 vinyl polymers, styrene based polymers, acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene resins, vinyl
13 polymer resins, engineering thermoplastics, and thermoset type resins or coatings which
14 would all provide the necessary barrier to chewing destruction of an animal.

15 In addition, as also illustrated in FIG. 5, preferably, bottom platform 26
16 preferably contains a hollow section 41 for the incorporation of a ballast material, such as
17 sand, to improve the weight of structure 10 for purposes of positioning stability.
18 Alternatively, bottom platform can be made from a material that is itself of greater weight
19 relative to the sidewall and/or roof section.

20 With all of the above in mind, it is herein disclosed that preferably, the materials
21 employed for the structure 10 are first selected from those materials that provide thermal

1 insulation, and accordingly, include expanded type polymer materials, preferably foam
2 materials, optionally containing a film type surface. Along those lines, and again with
3 reference to FIG. 1, roof sections 28 and 30, as well as sidewall sections 16, 18 and 20,
4 front wall section 29, rear wall section 34, and bottom platform 26 are all preferably
5 made from expanded polymeric foam material, such as expanded or foamed polystyrene
6 material, which foam material may contain an film surface of high-impact polystyrene.
7 In addition, other foam materials are suitable, including but not limited to polyurethane
8 type foam materials, polyurea/urethane, polyurea, trimer foam, etc. Accordingly, in
9 broad embodiment, any synthetic foam material that provides thermal insulation and
10 temperature control of the interior of the foldable/collapsible structure will be suitable for
11 construction of the present invention.

12 Furthermore, the above identified sections of FIG. 1 can also be suitably
13 prepared from non-foamed plastic material, or, for that matter, plastic material which
14 provides a void or null space between sections thereof, which would also similarly
15 provide thermal insulation characteristics. Moreover, the structure of the present
16 invention can be prepared from structural type foam material, which, is preferably made
17 from engineering type plastic resins such as polycarbonate resin. As those skilled in the
18 art are aware, structural foam material, while perhaps not as efficient as expanded or
19 cellular type foam material, still can provide thermal insulation efficiency, while at the
20 same time, structural integrity to the various compents (sidewalls, bottom platform, roof
21 section) of the present invention.

1 In addition, it is also possible to prepare structure 10 out of material made from
2 such techniques as gas-assisted injection molding. Such process, which preferably makes
3 use of gases such as nitrogen, provides an inert gas to the interiors (null space) of the
4 sidewalls 12 and 14, roof sections 28 and 30, front wall 29 and rear wall 34. In addition,
5 said structural components can also be made hollow and optionally contain common
6 thermal insulation media such as fiberglass or cellulose type material.

7 When foam material is employed in the present invention, it has also been found
8 preferable to include, on the outer layer of the foam (i.e., that surface exposed to weather)
9 a film protective layer that prevents weather damage to the foam layer, and also provides
10 a better or improved cosmetic appearance. That is, those skilled in the art will appreciate
11 that the film layer can be made to assume a wood-like grain appearance, such that the
12 structure 10 takes on the appearance of a wood structure, which is cosmetically pleasing
13 to the consumer. In that regard, a particularly preferred embodiment centers on the use of
14 expanded polystyrene foam for the structure 10, and an outer film layer, also of
15 polystyrene resin.

16 On that note, the outer film material can also conveniently serve as an integral
17 type hinge material. For example, pivots 32, 17, 22 and 24, as shown in FIG. 1, can of
18 course, comprise an add-on standard type hinge construction, and can therefore be of
19 sufficient number (running along the length of the structure) to effectuate the
20 foldable/collapsible mechanism herein described. Alternatively, said pivots can also run
21 the entire length of the structure, and be made of a polyolefin (polypropylene), which

1 therefore provides a living-hinge characteristic to the present invention. Again, the living
2 hinge can be either a non-integral feature of the roof, sidewalls, and bottom section (i.e.
3 an add-on), or, alternatively, can be integral to said structural components as illustrated in
4 the drawings.

5 Finally, attention is directed to **FIGS. 6-8**, which illustrates, among other things,
6 that in preferred embodiment, bottom sidewall section 20 is made to rest within bottom
7 platform 26. In addition, preferably, the front and rear walls are made to contain a
8 location recess 42 and an assembly recess 44. Accordingly, those skilled in the art will
9 appreciate that the location recess 42 and assembly recess 44 will, in optional
10 embodiment, improve and lock roof sections 28 and 30 to said front and rear side wall
11 sections, thereby providing improved, but by no means necessary, structural integrity to
12 the collapsible/foldable structure of the present invention.

13 Although this invention has been disclosed and illustrated with reference to
14 particular embodiments, the principles involved are susceptible for use in numerous other
15 embodiments which will be apparent to persons of ordinary skill in the art. The invention
16 is, therefore, to be limited only as indicated by the scope of the appended claims:

1 We claim:

2 1. A collapsible/foldable structure comprising:

3 a top roof and a bottom platform defining a top and bottom of said structure;

4 front and rear collapsible walls each pivotally attached to said bottom platform to
5 provide for pivotable collapse of said front and rear walls;

6 a pair of sidewalls each pivotally attached to said roof to facilitate inward collapse
7 of said sidewalls when said sidewalls are pivoted toward said bottom platform, said
8 sidewalls further containing an upper, middle and lower sections, wherein said upper and
9 middle sections are pivotally attached to one another and said middle and lower section
10 are also pivotally attached to one another so that said upper and middle sidewall sections
11 can be pivoted inwardly towards said bottom platform;

12 and wherein said top roof section further comprises two roof sections pivotally
13 attached to one another at about the mid-point of said roof section, so that said two roof
14 sections can collapse downwardly along said pivotable attachment toward said bottom
15 platform.

16 2. The structure of claim 1, wherein said sidewalls contain an outer an inner
17 surface thereof, and wherein said upper and middle sidewalls are pivotally attached to one
18 another at the outer surface of said sidewalls.

19 3. The structure of claim 1, wherein said sidewalls contain an outer and inner
20 surface thereof, and wherein said middle and lower sections are pivotally attached to one
21 another at the inner surface of said sidewalls.

1 4. The structure of claim 1, wherein said top roof, bottom platform, pair of
2 sidewalls, and said front and rear walls are made from a thermal insulating polymeric
3 foam material.

4 5. The structure of claim 4 wherein said foam material is expanded
5 polystyrene foam.

6 6. The structure of claim 4, wherein said foam material is polyurethane
7 foam.

8 7. The structure of claim 1, wherein said top roof, bottom platform, pair of
9 sidewalls, and said front and rear walls are made of a plastic material.

10 8. The structure of claim 1, wherein said top roof, bottom platform, pair of
11 sidewalls, and said front and rear walls are made of a structural foam material.

12 9. The structure of claim 4, wherein said foam material further contains a
13 protective film coating.

14 10. The structure of claim 1, wherein said bottom platform section contains a
15 hollow region thereof, and said hollow region is filled with ballast material.

16 11. The structure of claim 1, wherein said sidewalls, pivotally attached to said
17 roof to facilitate inward collapse, are pivotally attached substantially along a length of
18 said sidewalls, and said pivotal attachment comprises a living hinge.

19 12. The structure of claim 1, wherein said upper and middle sections pivotally
20 attached to one another, are pivotally attached substantially along a length of said
21 sidewalls, and said pivotal attachment comprises a living hinge.

1 13. The structure of claim 1, wherein said middle and lower sections that are
2 pivotally attached to one another are pivotally attached substantially along a length of
3 said sidewalls, and said pivotal attachment comprises a living hinge.

4 14. The structure of claim 1, wherein said two roof sections pivotally attached
5 to one another at about the mid-point of said roof section, are pivotally attached along a
6 length of said sidewalls, and said pivotal attachment comprises a living hinge.

7 15. The structure of claim 1, wherein said pair of sidewalls contain a outer
8 integral skin layer, which skin layer provides for said pivotal attachment between said
9 upper and middle sections as well as pivotal attachment between said middle and lower
10 sidewall sections.

Abstract

A collapsible/foldable structure comprising a top roof and a bottom platform defining a top and bottom of the structure and a front and rear collapsible wall each pivotally attached to the bottom platform to provide for pivotable collapse of the front and rear walls. The structure further contains a pair of sidewalls each pivotally attached to the roof to facilitate inward collapse of said sidewalls when said sidewalls are pivoted toward the bottom platform. The sidewalls further contain an upper, middle and lower section, wherein the upper and middle sections are pivotally attached to one another and the middle and lower section are also pivotally attached to one another so that the upper and middle sidewall sections can be pivoted inwardly towards the bottom platform. Furthermore, the top roof section further comprises two roof sections pivotally attached to one another at about the mid-point of the roof section, so that the two roof sections can collapse downwardly along the pivotable attachment toward the bottom platform. The collapsible/foldable structure herein is particularly useful as a shelter for domestic pets and other small animals.

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

Attorney Docket No: TFE 99.03

First Named Inventor: Axelrod et al

Complete if known: Serial No: _____ Filing Date: February 22, 1999

Group Art Unit: _____ Examiner: _____

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled **FOLDABLE/COLLAPSIBLE STRUCTURE** the specification of which is attached hereto.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, S. 1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or of any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s):

			<u>Priority Claimed</u>		<u>Certified Copy Attached</u>	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)				
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)				
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

Application No:

Filing Date:

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120 of any United States application(s), or 365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States of America, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

US Parent Application No. or PCT Parent Appln. No.	Parent Filing Date	Parent Patent Number (if applicable)
---	--------------------	---

And I hereby appoint HAYES, SOLOWAY, HENNESSEY, GROSSMAN & HAGE, P.C., a firm composed of Oliver W. Hayes, Reg. No. 15,867; Norman P. Soloway, Reg. No. 24,315; William O. Hennessey, Reg. No. 32,032; Susan H. Hage, Reg. No. 29,646; Steven J. Grossman, Reg. No. 35,001; and Edmund Paul Pfieger, Reg. No. 41,252, or any of them, of 175 Canal Street, Manchester, New Hampshire 03101 (Telephone: 603-668-1400) my attorneys with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent Office connected therewith.

Please direct all future correspondence in connection with this application to the attention of Norman P. Soloway HAYES, SOLOWAY, HENNESSEY, GROSSMAN & HAGE, P.C., 175 Canal Street, Manchester, New Hampshire 03101 (Telephone: 603-668-1400).

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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Second Inventor's signature

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PAGE: 003

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IMPORTANT NOTICE RE DUTY OF CANDOR AND GOOD FAITH

The Duty of Disclosure requirements of Section 1.56(a), of Title 37 of the Code of Federal Regulations are as follows:

A duty of candor and good faith toward the Patent and Trademark Office rests on the inventor, on each attorney or agent who prepares or prosecutes the application and on every other individual who is substantively involved in the preparation or prosecution of the application and who is associated with the inventor, with the assignee or with anyone to whom there is an obligation to assign the application. All such individuals have a duty to disclose to the Office information they are aware of which is material to the examination of the application. Such information is material where there is a substantial likelihood that a reasonable examiner would consider it important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent. The duty is commensurate with the degree of involvement in the preparation or prosecution of the application.

By virtue of this regulation each inventor executing the Declaration for the filing of a Patent Application acknowledges his duty to disclose information of which he is aware and which may be material to the examination of the application.

Inherent in this is the duty to disclose any knowledge or belief that the invention:

- (a) was ever known or used in the United States of America before his invention thereof;
- (b) was patented or described in any printed publication in any country before his invention thereof or more than one year prior to the actual filing date of the U.S. patent application;
- (c) was in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to the actual filing date of the U.S. patent application; or
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NOTE: The "information" concerned includes, but is not limited to, all published applications and patents, including applicant's and assignee's own, U.S. or foreign applications and patents, as well as any other pertinent prior art known, or which becomes known, to the inventor or his representatives. Where English language equivalents of foreign language documents are known, they should be identified and, when possible, copies supplied. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in a patent issued on the application being held invalid even if the known prior art which is not supplied is material to only one claim of that patent.

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FIG. 2

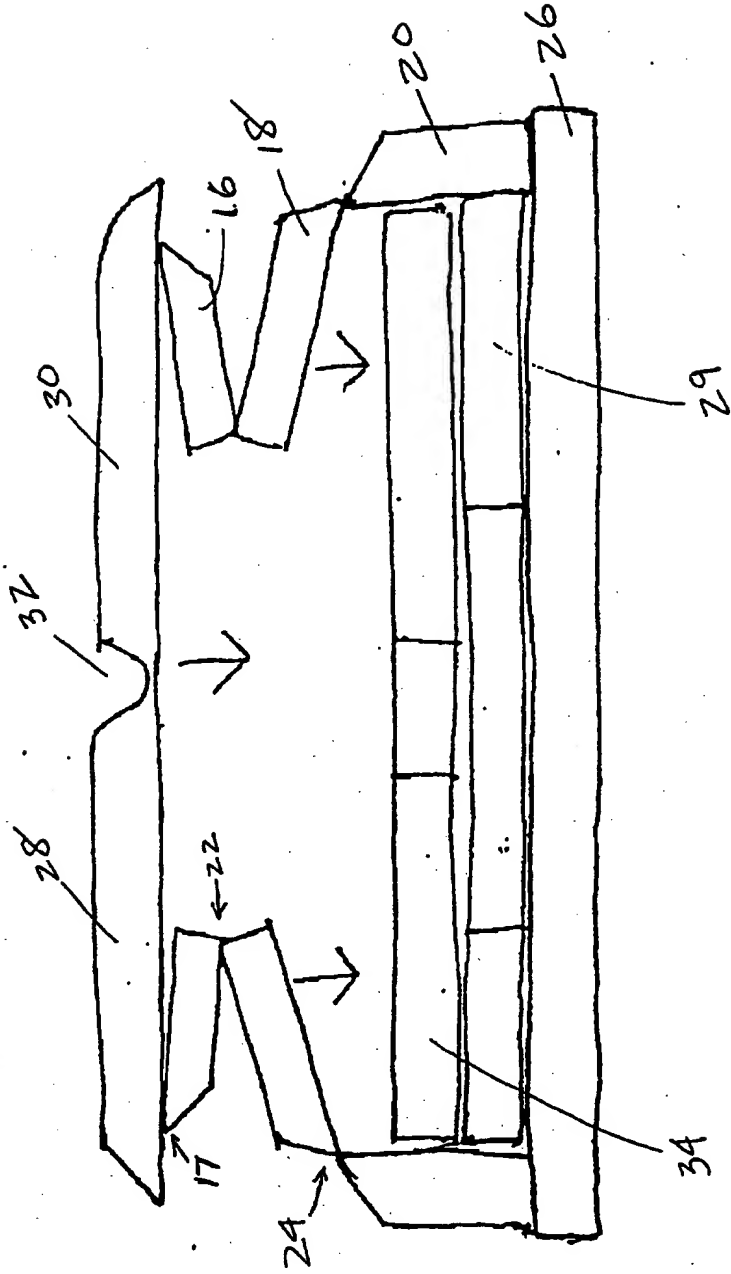


FIG. 3

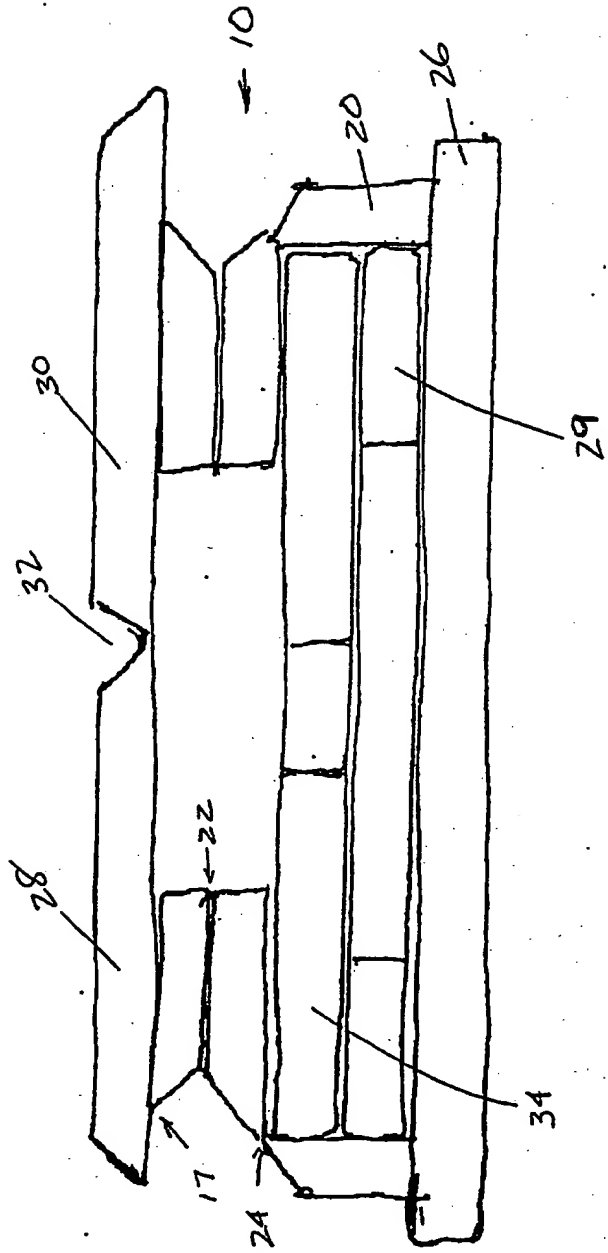
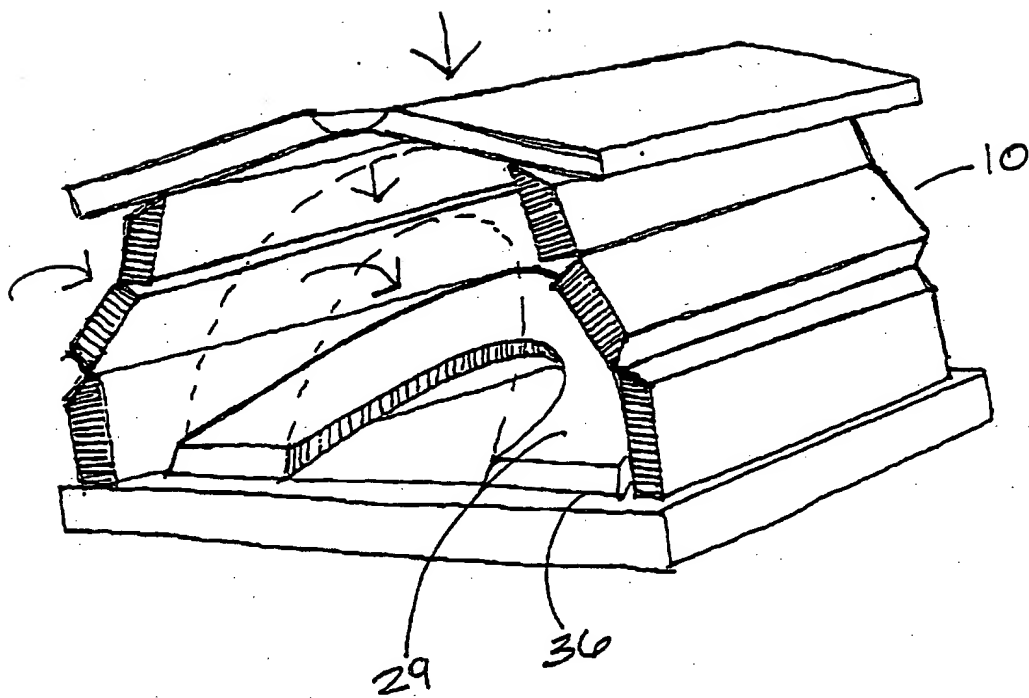
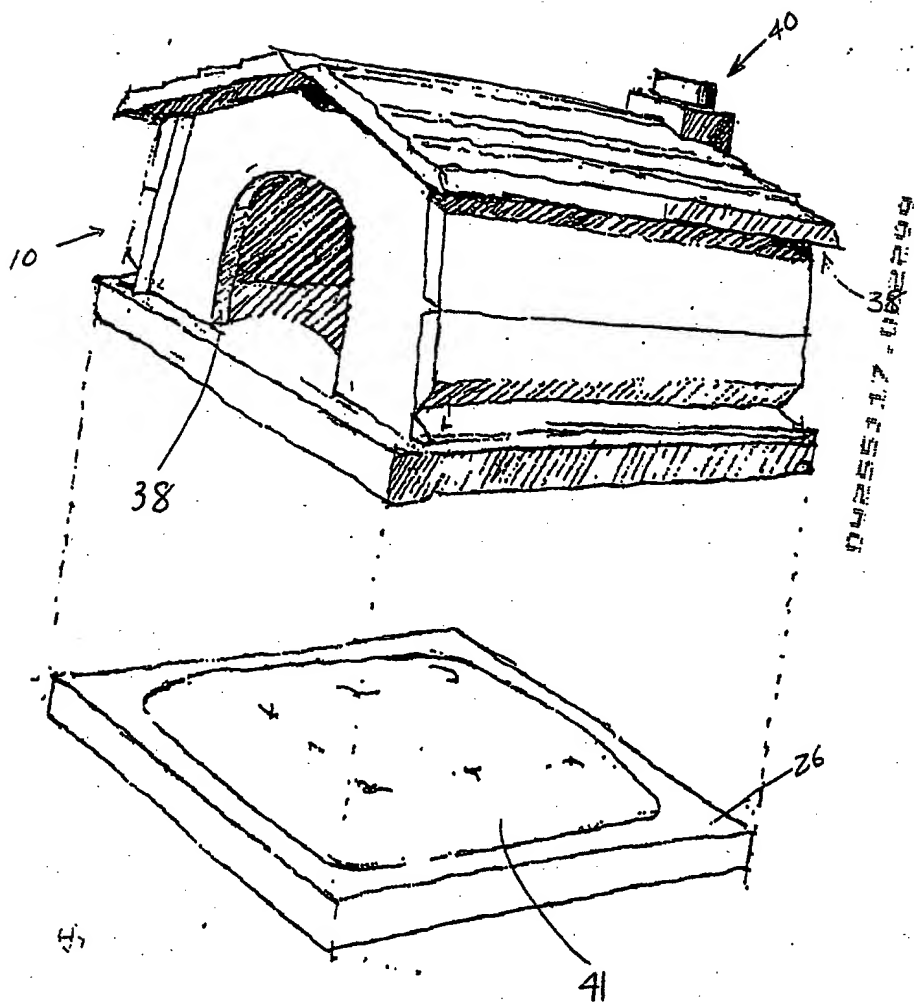


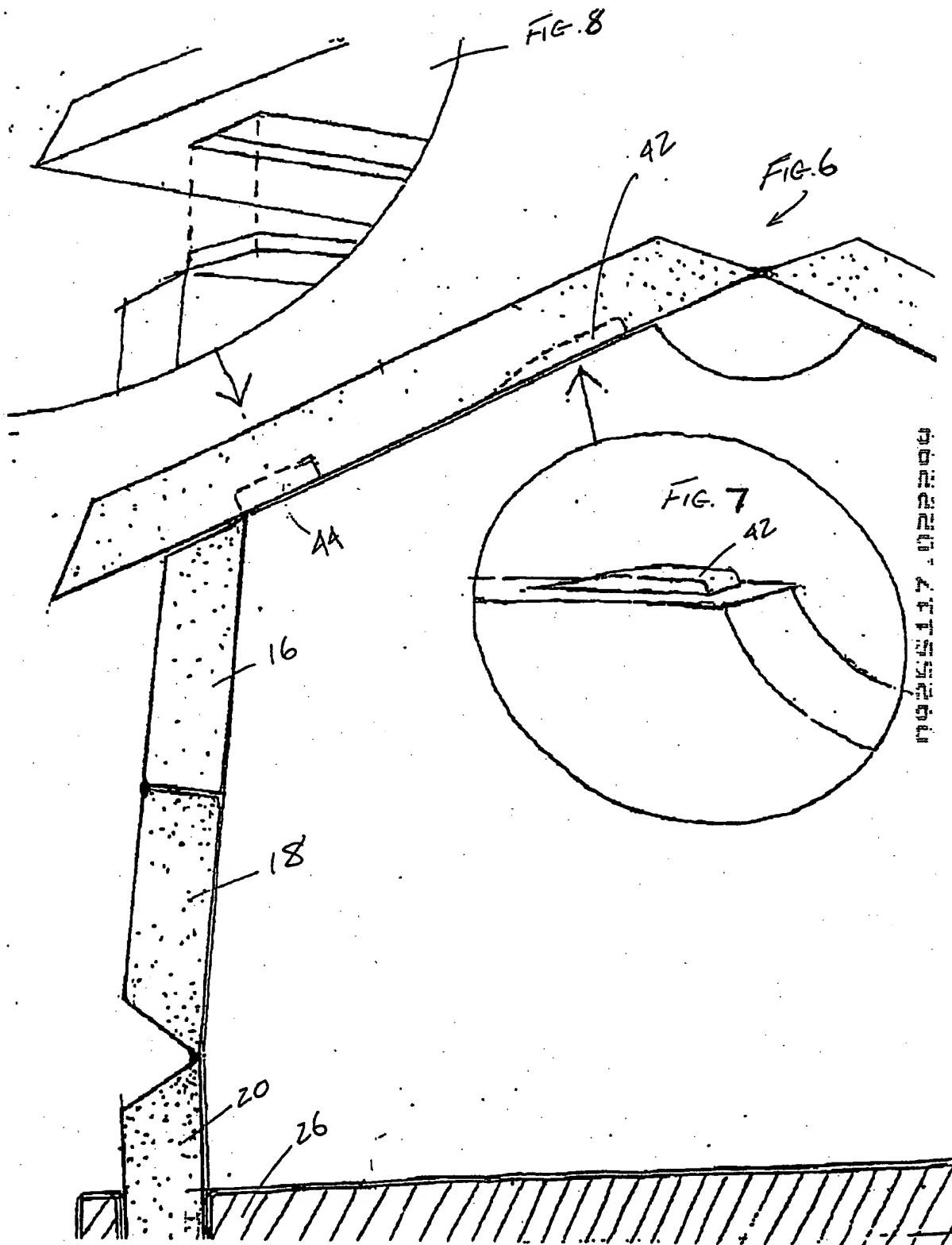
FIG. 4



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FIG. 5





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APPLICATION THAT MET THE REQUIREMENTS TO BE GRANTED A
FILING DATE UNDER 35 USC 111.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 09/266,389
FILING DATE: March 11, 1999
PCT APPLICATION NUMBER: PCT/US00/04357



By Authority of the
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Docket No.: TFF 99.04

Date: March 11, 1999

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BOX PATENT APPLICATION
COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS & TRADEMARKS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of:

Inventor: Glen Axelrod

For: Pat Carrier

Enclosed are the following:

- ☒ Letter: SUBMISSION OF INCOMPLETE APPLICATION
☒ Specification 12 pages; Claims 4 pages; Abstract 1 page
☒ Declaration and Power of Attorney
☒ sheet(s) of drawings 6 pages
☒ An assignment of the invention to: T.F.H. Publications
☐ A verified statement to establish small entity status
☐ A certified copy of application No. filed
☐ Prior Art Disclosure Statement
☐ Preliminary Amendment

Priority is hereby claimed under 35 USC 119 by way of patent application
No. filed

Benefit is hereby claimed under Title 35, United States Code 119(e) of United States provisional application
No. filed

The filing fee has been calculated as shown below:

		SMALL ENTITY	LARGE ENTITY
BASIC FEE:		\$ 380.00	\$ 760.00
TOTAL CLAIMS:	20 - 20 = -0-	x 9 =	x 18 = -0-
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS:	3 - 3 = -0-	x 39 =	x 78 = -0-
MULT. DEPEND. CLAIMS:		+130 =	+260 = -0-
TOTAL:		\$	\$ 760.00

- ☒ A check in the amount of \$ ^{800.00} ~~760.00~~ is enclosed to cover the fees.
☒ (\$40.00 Assignment recordal fee is included)

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional filing fees required under 37 CFR 1.16
or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-1391.

Attorney of Record
Steven J. Grossman, Reg. No. 35,001

CERTIFICATE OF EXPRESS MAILING

"Express Mail" Mailing Label No. EM550582188US Date of Deposit March 11, 1999

I hereby certify that this paper and the papers listed thereon are being deposited with the United States
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Incoming Mailroom, 1B01 Crystal Plaza 2, 2021 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202-3602.

Signature of person mailing: Kristine Stevens
Name of person mailing: Kristine Stevens

1 PET CARRIER

2 FIELD OF INVENTION

3 This invention relates in general to a pet carrier transportation device and
4 in particular to a collapsible/foldable pet carrier or portable structure that absorbs
5 or isolates liquid waste that may be present in the carrier and which carrier design
6 further provides a more sanitary condition for the pet when in transport.

7 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

8 A variety of pet carriers have been reported in the prior art, all aimed in
9 one form or another to facilitate pet transportation. Specifically, pet carriers are
10 commonly used by pet owners for carrying their pets on trips or as a means for
11 containing the pets when the pets are shipped from one point to another. Pet
12 carriers also commonly double as sleeping quarters for the pet as the owner may
13 contain the pet overnight to prevent the pet from wandering and potentially
14 damaging the home or hotel room in which the owner is occupying.

15 There are, however, some shortcomings inherent to common pet carriers.
16 During transport, the pet will require food and water and periodically will need to
17 relieve its bodily functions. In addition, the food and water itself, which are
18 placed in the pet carrier, may be overturned by the pet or by carrier movement
19 during transportation. Accordingly, in either case, the pet carriers to date have
20 been inadequate in their ability to efficiently deal with such problems and to
21 provide the pet with a stable hygienic environment.

22 For example, some common pet carriers currently available have been
23 advertised in the "R.C. Steele Wholesale Pet Supply Catalog", Brockport, New

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1 York, which illustrates "Dorskocil Kennels" as a lightweight, portable kennel
2 designed for safe transportation. Also shown is the "Vari-Kennel" design that
3 contains what is described as a "dial latch system" for ease of assembly.
4 However, neither of these designs display any aspect of how to preserve a sanitary
5 condition in the specific carrier should the animal be forced to relieve itself.

6 More specifically, reviewing the patent literature begins with U.S. Patent
7 No. 5,769,028, entitled "Pet Carrier" which discloses a carrier including a main
8 unit and an insert unit. The main unit defines a carrying space having a closed
9 bottom and four sides, one of which has an opening therethrough large enough to
10 permit an animal to enter the space through the opening, and the insert unit has a
11 closed top, four sides, and an open bottom. After the animal has entered the main
12 unit, the insert unit is lowered down into the main unit to close off the side
13 opening. Then a foldable top closure for the main unit is folded to secure the
14 carrier and form a handle structure for carrying the carrier. Both units are
15 foldable and are structured to provide an enhanced strength carrier.

16 U.S. Patent No. 5,503,107 entitled "Pet Carrier" discloses a container for
17 manually transporting a pet having a litter box, food container and water container
18 therein and sliding doors accessible from the exterior of the container for
19 selectively closing the litter box, food container and water container to prevent
20 inadvertent spillage. The container may also include a single compartment or two
21 detachably connected compartments in order that a litter box compartment may be
22 selectively separated from a food and water compartment. Detachable handles are

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1 provided in order that each separate compartment of the dual compartment
2 embodiment may be carried separately or as a unified compartment.

3 U.S. Patent No. 5,839,392, entitled "Pet Carrier" discloses a corrugated
4 plastic pet carrier with two side panels. A side panel fold line extends between
5 the base panel and each side panel. In addition, a diagonal fold line is said to
6 extend from each corner of the base panel to a first median fold line for collapsing
7 the base panel, side panels and end panels inwardly for collapsing the container
8 from an erect position to a collapsed, generally flat position, and back to an erect
9 position.

10 U.S. Patent No. 5,671,698 entitled "Pet Carrier" discloses a pet housing
11 having a rigid bottom panel enclosed in a bottom cover which is attached to a
12 plastic mesh which is shaped to form the pet carrier sides and top. The plastic
13 mesh is attached to inverted U shaped rigid frame members which hold the shape
14 of the sides and top as well as provide structural support to protect the pet being
15 transported. The pet carrier has a rear end panel and door of plastic mesh to
16 complete the enclosure. There is a provision for a tray and absorbent pad in the
17 bottom of the pet carrier for hygiene as well as a cover to protect the pet from the
18 environment.

19 U.S. Patent No. 5,133,294, entitled "Pet Carrier for Vehicles" discloses a
20 pet carrier for use in a vehicle comprising a platform sized to generally fit on the
21 passenger seat. Front, rear and side panels are pivotally connected to the platform
22 for movement between generally horizontal positions and upright positions
23 wherein they form a pet enclosure upstanding from the platform.

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1 Finally, attention is directed to U.S. Patent No. 5,715,772 entitled "Pet
2 Carrier Absorbent Pad" which discloses an absorbent pad designed to be used
3 with pet carriers to absorb liquids that may be present. Specifically, the pad is
4 said to contain an absorbent layer having first and second sides, a first single
5 direction moisture conveyor positioned proximate to at least one side of the
6 absorbent layer for allowing moisture to pass toward the absorbent layer and for
7 resisting passage of moisture out of said absorbent layer. A second single
8 direction moisture conveyor is positioned proximate to said second side of said
9 absorbent layer, wherein the first and second direction moisture conveyors are
10 oriented about said absorbent layer so that moisture travels across said moisture
11 conveyors only toward said absorbent layer.

12 As can be seen from the above review of the art, although certain pet
13 carrier designs have been disclosed which are collapsible, and although absorbent
14 pads of certain construction are known, there remains an on-going demand for a
15 pet carrier design which more efficiently deals with liquid waste build-up, and
16 which also collapses into a substantially flat configuration for ease of
17 storage/transportation when not in use. Stated another way, pet carriers to date
18 have shown themselves to be relatively bulky and heavy thereby failing to provide
19 a simple, lightweight and portable pet carrier which provides both comfort and
20 good hygiene for the pet, and also provides a safe/sturdy structure for protection
21 during transport.

22 Accordingly, it is a general object of this invention to provide a pet carrier
23 that is conveniently collapsible for storage, and which provides both the pet and

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1 the pet owner with a advantageous method to deal with the liquid animal waste
2 that will occur in the carrier over extended periods of time.

3 More specifically, it is also an object of this invention to provide a pet
4 carrier design that allows for ease of cleaning of animal waste, and which isolates
5 the animal from the liquid waste when the pet is forced to remain in the carrier
6 after relieving itself.

7 Finally, it is also an object of this invention to provide a more humane
8 method of transporting pets. That is, it is an object of the invention herein to
9 provide a pet carrier construction wherein the pet can be provided with essential
10 liquid nourishment when in transport without fear of the pet becoming exposed to
11 unsanitary and unhealthy conditions due to the evolution of a soiled environment.

12 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

13 A pet carrier/portable structure for containing a pet comprising a bottom
14 panel, a tray placed within said bottom panel which tray is removable therefrom,
15 including a top panel, a left panel, a right panel and a first end panel and a second
16 end panel. The first and second end panel are releasably engaged to said carrier
17 and the left and right panels each comprise an upper and lower section hingedly
18 connected to one another so as to collapse the left and right panels inwardly into
19 said pet carrier. The tray further comprises screen material which screen material
20 allows for passage of liquid into said tray and which screen material also supports
21 the pet above said liquid.

22

23

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

1 FIG. 1 illustrates a perspective view of one preferred embodiment pet
2 carrier/portable structure design.

3 FIG. 2 illustrates a perspective view of the pet carrier removable tray.

4 FIG. 3 illustrates a front perspective view of a preferred pet carrier design.

5 FIG. 4 illustrates a side perspective view of a preferred pet carrier design
6 in partially collapsed configuration.

7 FIG. 5 illustrates a front perspective view of a preferred pet carrier design
8 in partially collapsed configuration.

9 FIG. 6 illustrates a front perspective view of the preferred pet carrier
10 design in a fully collapsed configuration.

11 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

12 A preferred pet carrier/portable structure design in accordance with the
13 present invention is illustrated in FIG. 1. As shown therein, the pet carrier 10
14 contains a bottom panel 12 and tray 14 removably placed on the bottom panel, a
15 top panel 16, a left panel 18, a right panel 20 and a first end panel 22 containing a
16 screen door section 24. In addition, the carrier contains a folding handle 26 which
17 rests within recess 28. Also shown about the carrier 10 are air holes 30. As
18 shown in FIG. 1, the first end panel 22 is hingedly attached to bottom panel 12 so
19 that end panel 22 can be readily made to collapse inwardly into carrier 10. In a
20 similar manner, carrier 10 also preferably contains a second end panel (not
21 shown) at the rear of the carrier that is also hingedly attached to the bottom panel
22 12 so that it too can be made to collapse inwardly into the carrier 10 when the
23 carrier 10 is not in use.

1 With attention directed at both FIGS. 1 and 2, the tray 14 is shown to have
 2 a screen material 32 which screen material preferably rests on top of the tray 14.
 3 The screen material 32 therefore conveniently allows for passage of liquid into the
 4 tray but also simultaneously supports the pet above any liquid passing into tray
 5 14, thereby providing an improved sanitary condition for the pet over extended
 6 periods of time.

7 In that regard, screen 32 is preferably constructed from a double layer of
 8 screen material. That is, screen 32 preferably contains a top layer of fine
 9 mesh/screen material to allow for both fluid passage while preventing a paw or
 10 nail of the animal from falling therethrough and becoming dangerously affixed to
 11 said mesh/screen material. Accordingly, such upper layer of mesh/screen material
 12 is preferably made close enough in opening to be comfortable for the animal to
 13 walk upon when the animal is placed within the carrier. This upper layer of fine
 14 mesh is then placed upon a lower structural grid screen which is therein designed
 15 to support the animal's weight. With respect to this preferred use of a double
 16 layer of screen material, it has been found that the top layer is preferably of mesh
 17 size or sieve size No. 400 to about 0.25 (nominal opening of 0.0015 to 0.250 inch
 18 as noted in the "Handbook of Chemistry and Physics CRC, 58th Edition, Standard
 19 Test Sieves-Wire Cloth") and can be made from plastic or metallic type
 20 screen/mesh material. At such screen/mesh size, and as noted, the mesh will
 21 conveniently allow for passage of liquids, which of course include liquids spilled
 22 by the animal and/or liquid waste produced by the animal if forced to urinate in
 23 the carrier. The lower structural layer can then be readily fabricated from larger

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1 and heavier mesh/screen size material, such as, e.g., mesh size of greater than
2 about 0.25 inch to, e.g., 5 inch, which corresponds to a nominal opening of 0.25
3 inch to 5 inches. The lower structural layer has as its purpose to support the load
4 of the animal, while again, allowing for fluid passage.

5 Alternatively, those skilled in the art will appreciate that screen 32 can be
6 made of a simple monolayer type screen/mesh construction, which monolayer
7 similarly achieves the goal of allowing for fluid passage and acts to prevent a paw
8 or nail from falling through and becoming lodged therein, which could cause
9 injury to the animal. However, if monolayer construction is the choice, the
10 monolayer itself must be made sufficiently strong/rigid to support the animal's
11 weight contained therein. In that regard, it has been found suitable to use a
12 monolayer type screen/mesh material of a mesh size for positioning on tray 14 so
13 that tray 14 acts to collect liquid or liquid waste and simultaneously supports the
14 animal above such captured liquids. In that regard, the mesh size can again be
15 preferably made in the range of mesh size No. 400 to 0.25. However, this is only
16 a preferred range, and as noted above, the selection of mesh size is done to
17 accommodate passage of fluids and to prevent injury to the animal by preventing
18 the animal's paw or nail from becoming trapped.

19 FIG 3 shows a front perspective view of the carrier 10. As illustrated
20 therein, the screen door section 24 is preferably hinged at 34 to the end panel 22
21 and also preferably contains a latch 36. As also shown in FIG. 3, the tray 14 rests
22 in the bottom panel 12, and the folding handle is again shown at 26.

1 Attention is next directed to FIG. 4, which provides a side perspective
2 view of a preferred pet carrier design in partially collapsed configuration. As seen
3 therein, first end panel 22 containing screen door 24 is hingedly collapsed
4 inwardly into the pet carrier. Similarly, second end panel 38 is hingedly collapsed
5 into the pet carrier, which collapsing first end panel 22 and second end panel 38
6 initiates the folding of the carrier into a substantially flat construction for ease of
7 storage. Also, as shown in this particular preferred embodiment, end panel 38 is
8 hingedly connected to bottom panel 12.

9 However, while FIG. 4 illustrates the preferred configuration herein
10 where the first end panel 22 and second end panel 38 are hingedly connected to
11 the bottom panel 12, it will be appreciated that end panels 22 and 38 can simply
12 be made so that they are releasably engaged to the pet carrier, e.g., by a
13 mechanical attachment such as a snap-fit or wing-nuts with quick release. In that
14 manner the end panels can be easily released/removed from the pet carrier and/or
15 placed within the pet carrier for the purposes of shipping/storage.

16 FIG. 5 illustrates a front perspective view of a preferred pet carrier design
17 in partially collapsed configuration. As shown therein, the panels 18 or 20 are
18 both hingedly connected at 40 to top panel 16. In addition, a hinged connection is
19 shown at 42 and a further hinge connection is placed at 44, which connection 44
20 connects the panels 18 and 20 to the bottom section 44. As shown in FIG. 5, such
21 strategic placement of hinges 40, 42 and 44 allows for the panels 18 and 20 to
22 collapse downwardly into a substantially flat collapsed configuration, as shown in
23 FIG. 6. That is, with attention to FIG. 6, handle 26 is made to rest in a recess in

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1 the top panel 16, panels 18 and 20 are in a fully collapsed state, as well as panels
2 22 and 38. In this collapsed state, it can be seen that tray 14 still conveniently
3 rests within bottom panel 14. Accordingly, it can be appreciated that in the
4 collapsed state shown in FIG. 6, the pet carrier design herein can be conveniently
5 stored or transported for further use.

6 Finally, with attention again directed at FIG. 5, as illustrated therein,
7 hinge connections 40, 42 and 44 are arranged such that panels 18 and 20 collapse
8 inwardly into the carrier. That being the case, the hinge 40 is preferably hinged
9 so that the hinge itself is positioned on the inside surface of panels 18 and 20; i.e.,
10 the hinge is inside the carrier as shown in FIG. 5. Hinge connection 42, as also
11 shown in FIG. 5, is itself positioned on the outside surface of panels 18 and 20,
12 and finally, hinge 44 is preferably designed so that the hinge is connected to the
13 inside surface of panels 18 and 20. Such positioning of the hinge connections 40,
14 42 and 44 thereby facilitate the collapse of the panels 18 and 20, downwardly,
15 into the substantially flat configuration shown in FIG. 6.

16 In addition to the collapsing features noted above, attention is drawn to
17 U.S. Application Serial No. _____, filed February 22, 1999 entitled
18 "Foldable Collapsible Structure", commonly owned by the assignee herein, and
19 whose teachings are incorporated by reference. Specifically, as disclosed therein,
20 a collapsible/foldable structure is disclosed comprising a top roof and a bottom
21 platform defining a top and bottom of said structure; front and rear collapsible
22 walls each pivotally attached to said bottom platform to provide for pivotable
23 collapse of said front and rear walls; a pair of sidewalls each pivotally attached to

1 said roof to facilitate inward collapse of said sidewalls when said sidewalls are
2 pivoted toward said bottom platform, said sidewalls further containing an upper,
3 middle and lower sections, wherein said upper and middle sections are pivotally
4 attached to one another and said middle and lower section are also pivotally
5 attached to one another so that said upper and middle sidewall sections can be
6 pivoted inwardly towards said bottom platform; and wherein said top roof section
7 further comprises two roof sections pivotally attached to one another at about the
8 mid-point of said roof section, so that said two roof sections can collapse
9 downwardly along said pivotable attachment toward said bottom platform.

10 Accordingly, in optional embodiment, the left panel 18 and right panel 20
11 as disclosed herein can be made to contain an upper, middle and lower sections,
12 wherein said upper and middle sections are pivotally or hingedly attached to one
13 another and said middle and lower section are also pivotally or hingedly attached
14 to one another so that said upper and middle panel sections can be pivoted or
15 hinged inwardly towards said bottom panel 12.

16 On that note, hinges 40, 42, and 44, as shown in FIG. 5, may comprise an
17 add-on standard mechanical type plastic or metallic hinge construction, and can
18 therefore be of sufficient number (running along the length of the structure) to
19 effectuate the foldable/collapsible mechanism herein described. Alternatively,
20 said hinges can also run the entire length of the structure, and be made of a
21 polyolefin (polypropylene), which therefore provides living-hinge characteristics
22 to the present invention. The living hinge can be either a non-integral feature of
23 the panels (i.e. an add-on), or, in alternative embodiment, can be made integral to

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1 said panels, in which case the hinge would be contiguous with the outer surface of
2 the panels 18 and 20.

3 Optionally, tray 14 can be made to contain an absorbent pad, for purposes
4 of soaking up any liquid spilled by the animal, or liquid waste should the animal
5 be forced to relieve itself when contained within the carrier. In addition, as
6 illustrated in FIG. 6, the tray 12 also preferably contains a recess at 46 which
7 conveniently provides a location for the consumer to hold onto the tray and
8 remove the tray from the carrier for any necessary cleaning.

9 With regards to the preferred materials of construction, it is to be noted
10 herein that the pet carrier panels are themselves preferably manufactured of
11 panels made of a plastic outer layer with a polyurethane foam core. Such
12 construction provides excellent thermal insulation, as well as light-weight and
13 durability for ease of transport. The plastic outer layer, as previously noted
14 above, can then be preferably made from a polyethylene or polypropylene resin,
15 to thereby provide a flexible film outer layer for the purposes of forming the
16 above noted hinge sections 40, 42 and 44. In that regard, a polypropylene film
17 would provide the aforementioned living hinge structure while being integral to
18 the outer plastic layer of the carrier panels.

19 Although this invention has been disclosed and illustrated with reference
20 to particular embodiments, the principles involved are susceptible for use in
21 numerous other embodiments which will be apparent to persons of ordinary skill
22 in the art. The invention is, therefore, to be limited only as indicated by the scope
23 of the appended claims.

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1 What is claimed is:

- 2 1. A pet carrier/portable structure for containing a pet comprising:
 - 3 a bottom panel, a tray removably placed within said bottom panel, a top
 - 4 panel, first and second side panels, a first end panel and a second end panel;
 - 5 said first end panel and second end panel hingedly attached to said pet
 - 6 carrier to collapse inwardly into said pet carrier and wherein said left and right
 - 7 panels are hingedly attached to said top and bottom panels;
 - 8 said first and second side panels each comprising an upper and lower
 - 9 section hingedly connected to one another so as to collapse said first and second
 - 10 side panels inwardly into said pet carrier;
 - 11 said tray comprising screen material which screen material allows for
 - 12 passage of liquid into said tray and which screen material also supports the pet
 - 13 above said liquid.
- 14 2. The pet carrier of claim 1 wherein said screen material comprises two
 - 15 layers of screen material, including a first layer of screen material to allow for
 - 16 fluid passage yet which first layer prevents entrapment of an animal paw or nail,
 - 17 and a second layer of screen material to support said animal's weight.
- 18 3. The pet carrier of claim 1, wherein said tray contains an absorbent pad
 - 19 for absorption of liquids.
- 20 4. The pet carrier of claim 1, wherein said screen material is of No. 400 to
 - 21 0.25 mesh supplying an opening in the range of about 0.0015 – 0.25 inch.

- 1 5. The pet carrier of claim 2, wherein said first layer of screen material
2 supplies an opening of about 0.0015 – 0.25 inch and said second layer of screen
3 material is contains openings greater than 0.25 inch.
- 4 6. The pet carrier of claim 1 wherein said first end panel contains a screen
5 door.
- 6 7. The pet carrier of claim 1, wherein said top panel contains a folding
7 handle and said top panel further contains a recess for receiving said handle.
- 8 8. A pet carrier/portable structure for containing a pet comprising:
9 a bottom panel, a tray removably placed within said bottom panel, a top
10 panel, first and second side panels, a first end panel and a second end panel;
11 said first and second end panel being releasably engaged to said carrier;
12 said first and second side panels each comprising an upper and lower
13 section hingedly connected to one another so as to collapse said first and second
14 side panels inwardly into said pet carrier;
15 said tray comprising screen material which screen material allows for
16 passage of liquid into said tray and which screen material also supports the pet
17 above said liquid.
- 18 9. The pet carrier of claim 8, wherein said screen material comprises two
19 layers of screen material, including a first layer of screen material to allow for
20 fluid passage yet which first layer prevents entrapment of an animal paw or nail,
21 and a second layer of screen material to support said animal's weight.
- 22 10. The pet carrier of claim 8, wherein said tray contains an absorbent pad
23 for absorption of liquids.

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1 11. The pet carrier of claim 8, wherein said screen material is of No. 400
2 to 0.25 mesh supplying an opening in the range of about 0.0015 – 0.25 inch.

3 12. The pet carrier of claim 9, wherein said first layer of screen material is
4 of mesh size No. 400 to 0.25 and said second layer of screen material is of mesh
5 size greater than 0.25.

6 13. The pet carrier of claim 8 wherein said first end panel contains a
7 screen door.

8 14. The pet carrier of claim 8, wherein said top panel contains a folding
9 handle and said top panel further contains a recess for receiving said handle.

10 15. In a pet carrier/portable structure for transporting and/or confining
11 animals containing a bottom panel, first and second side panels, and first and
12 second end panels, the improvement which comprises incorporating into each said
13 first and second side panels an upper and lower section hingedly connected both
14 to one another and to said pet carrier so as to inwardly collapse said first and
15 second side panels into said pet carrier to fold said pet carrier/portable structure
16 into a substantially flat configuration.

17 16. The pet carrier of claim 15, further containing a tray removably
18 placed on the inside of the pet carrier, said tray comprising a screen material
19 which screen material allows for passage of liquid into said tray and which screen
20 material also supports the pet above said liquid.

21 17. The pet carrier of claim 16, wherein said screen material comprises
22 two layers of screen material, including a first layer of screen material to allow for

1 fluid passage yet which first layer prevents entrapment of an animal paw or nail,
2 and a second layer of screen material to support said animal's weight.

3 18. The pet carrier of claim 17, wherein said first layer of screen material
4 supplies an opening of about 0.0015-0.25 inch.

5 19. The pet carrier of claim 15 wherein said hinge is made from a
6 polyolefin resin.

7 20. The pet carrier of claim 19 wherein said polyolefin resin is
8 polyethylene or polypropylene film.

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1
ABSTRACT

2 A pet carrier/portable structure for containing a pet/animal comprising a
3 bottom panel, a tray placed within said bottom panel which tray is removable
4 therefrom, including a top panel, a left panel, a right panel and a first end panel
5 and a second end panel. The first and second end panel are releasably engaged to
6 the carrier and the left and right panels each comprise upper and lower sections
7 hingedly connected both to one another and to the carrier so as to inwardly
8 collapse the left and right panels to fold the carrier into a substantially flat
9 configuration. The tray further comprises screen material which screen material
10 allows for passage of liquid into the tray and which screen material also alone or
11 in combination with a second layer supports the pet above said liquid and
12 prevents entrapment of the animal's nail or paw.

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DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

Attorney Docket No: TFH 99.04

First Named Inventor: Axelrod

Complete if known: Serial No: _____ Filing Date: _____

Group Art Unit: _____ Examiner: _____

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled PET CARRIER the specification of which is attached hereto.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, S. 1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or of any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s):

<u>Prior Foreign Application(s):</u>			<u>Priority Claimed</u>	<u>Certified Copy Attached</u>
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

Application No:

Filing Date:

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120 of any United States application(s), or 365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States of America, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

US Parent Application No. or PCT Parent Appln. No.	Parent Filing Date	Parent Patent Number (if applicable)
---	--------------------	---

And I hereby appoint HAYES, SOLOWAY, HENNESSEY, GROSSMAN & HAGE, P.C., a firm composed of Oliver W. Hayes, Reg. No. 15,867; Norman P. Soloway, Reg. No. 24,315; William O. Hennessey, Reg. No. 32,032; Susan H. Hage, Reg. No. 29,646; Steven J. Grossman, Reg. No. 35,001; and Edmund Paul Pfeiffer, Reg. No. 41,252, or any of them, of 175 Canal Street, Manchester, New Hampshire 03101 (Telephone: 603-668-1400) my attorneys with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent Office connected therewith.

Please direct all future correspondence in connection with this application to the attention of Norman P. Soloway HAYES, SOLOWAY, HENNESSEY, GROSSMAN & HAGE, P.C., 175 Canal Street, Manchester, New Hampshire 03101 (Telephone: 603-668-1400).

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of sole or first inventor: Glen Axelrod

First Inventor's signature

Date 8/11/99

Residence: c/o One E-H Plaza, Third and Union Avenues, Neptune City, New Jersey 07753

Citizenship: USA

Post Office Address: Same as residence

IMPORTANT NOTICE RE DUTY OF CANDOR AND GOOD FAITH

The Duty of Disclosure requirements of Section 1.56(a), of Title 37 of the Code of Federal Regulations are as follows:

A duty of candor and good faith toward the Patent and Trademark Office rests on the inventor, on each attorney or agent who prepares or prosecutes the application and on every other individual who is substantively involved in the preparation or prosecution of the application and who is associated with the inventor, with the assignee or with anyone to whom there is an obligation to assign the application. All such individuals have a duty to disclose to the Office information they are aware of which is material to the examination of the application. Such information is material where there is a substantial likelihood that a reasonable examiner would consider it important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent. The duty is commensurate with the degree of involvement in the preparation or prosecution of the application.

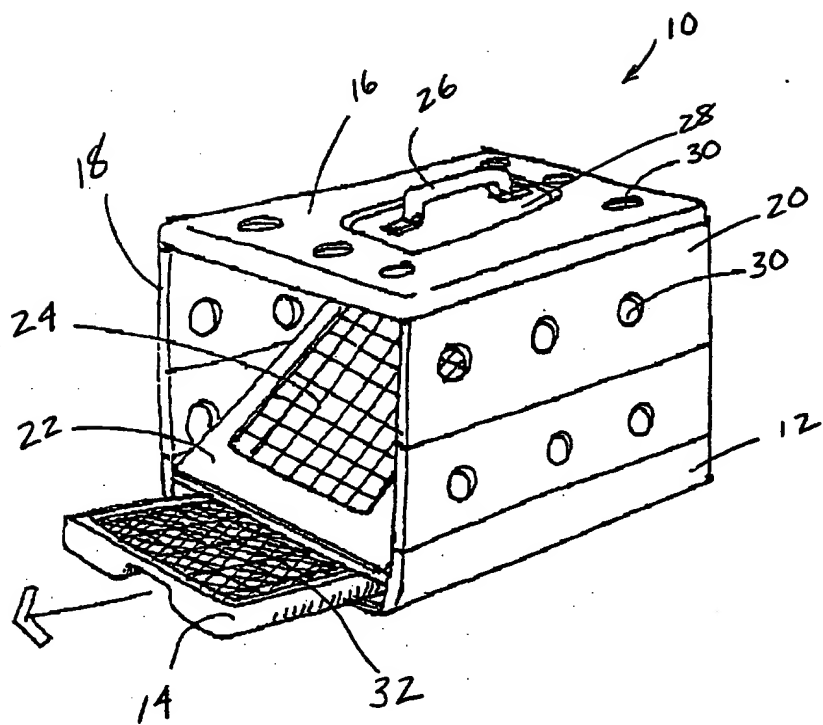
By virtue of this regulation each inventor executing the Declaration for the filing of a Patent Application acknowledges his duty to disclose information of which he is aware and which may be material to the examination of the application.

Inherent in this is the duty to disclose any knowledge or belief that the invention:

- (a) was ever known or used in the United States of America before his invention thereof;
- (b) was patented or described in any printed publication in any country before his invention thereof or more than one year prior to the actual filing date of the U.S. patent application;
- (c) was in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to the actual filing date of the U.S. patent application; or
- (d) has been patented or made the subject of inventor's certificate issued before the actual filing date of the U.S. patent application in any country foreign to the United States of America on an application filed by him or his legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months before the actual filing date in the United States.

NOTE: The "Information" concerned includes, but is not limited to, all published applications and patents, including applicant's and assignee's own, U.S. or foreign applications and patents, as well as any other pertinent prior art known, or which becomes known, to the inventor or his representatives. Where English language equivalents of foreign language documents are known, they should be identified and, when possible, copies supplied. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in a patent issued on the application being held invalid even if the known prior art which is not supplied is material to only one claim of that patent.

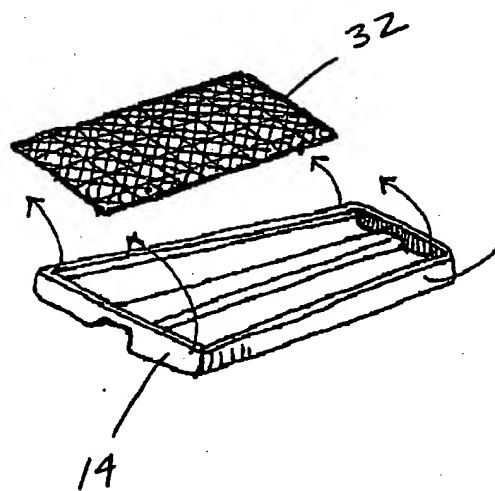
FIG. 1



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FIG. 2



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FIG. 3

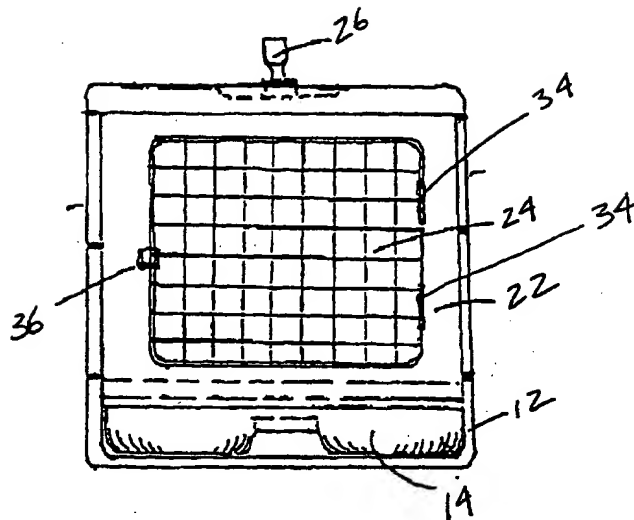
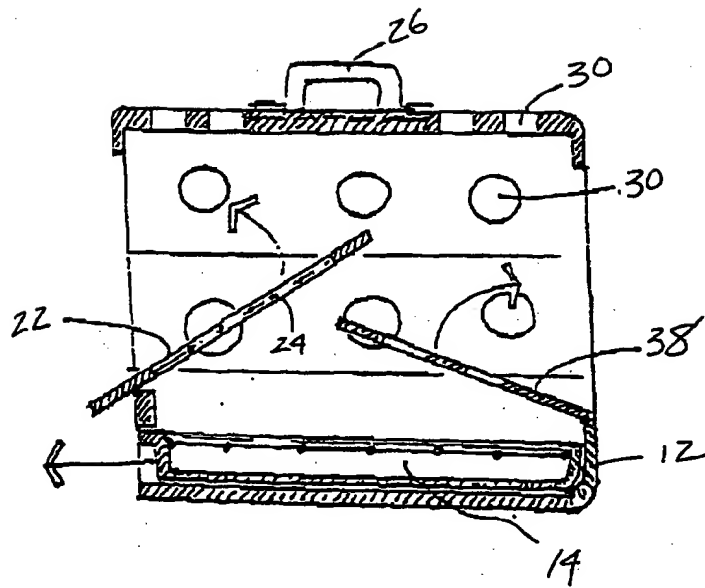


FIG. 4



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FIG. 5

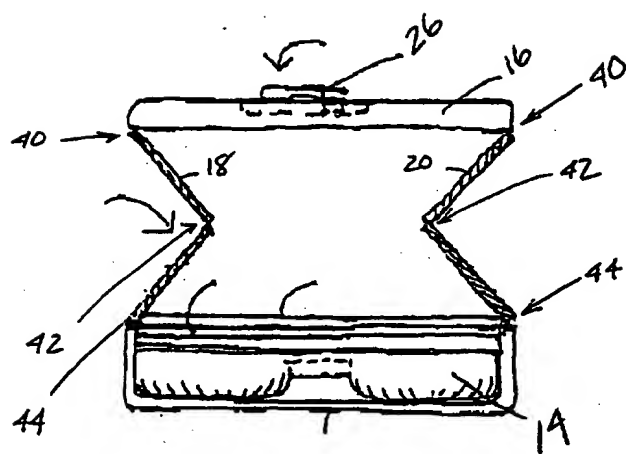
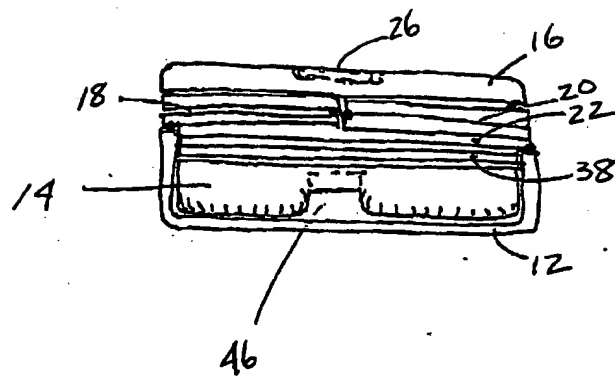


FIG. 6



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REC'D 11 APR 2000

WIPC

ESH

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office

April 07, 2000

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT ANNEXED HERETO IS A TRUE COPY FROM
THE RECORDS OF THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK
OFFICE OF THOSE PAPERS OF THE BELOW IDENTIFIED PATENT
APPLICATION THAT MET THE REQUIREMENTS TO BE GRANTED A
FILING DATE UNDER 35 USC 111.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 09/334,529

FILING DATE: June 16, 1999

PCT APPLICATION NUMBER: PCT/US00/04357



By Authority of the
COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS

T. Wallace
T. WALLACE
Certifying Officer

**PRIORITY
DOCUMENT**
SUBMITTED OR TRANSMITTED IN
COMPLIANCE WITH RULE 171(a) OR (b)

06/16/99
1553 U.S. PTO

Attorney's Docket No. TFH 99.04 CIP

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Box Patent Application
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of
Inventor(s):

Glen Axelrod

WARNING: Patent must be applied for in the name(s) of all of the actual inventor(s). 37 CFR 1.41(a) and 1.53(b).
For (title):

Pet Carrier

15541 U.S. PTO
09/334529
06/16/99

09334529-061699

CERTIFICATION UNDER 37 CFR 1.10

I hereby certify that this New Application Transmittal and the documents referred to as enclosed therein are being deposited with the United States Postal Service on this date June 16, 1999 in an envelope as "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" Mailing Label Number EM243580002US, addressed to the: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231.

Kristine Stevens

(type or print name of person mailing paper)

Kristine Stevens
Signature of person mailing paper

NOTE: Each paper or fee referred to as enclosed herein has the number of the "Express Mail" mailing label placed thereon prior to mailing. 37 CFR 1.10(b).

WARNING: Certificate of mailing (first class) or facsimile transmission procedures of 37 CFR 1.8 cannot be used to obtain a date of mailing or transmission for this correspondence.

(Application Transmittal [4-1]—page 1 of 8)

1. Type of Application

This new application is for a(n) (check one applicable item below):

- ☐ Original (nonprovisional)
☐ Design
☐ Plant

WARNING: Do not use this transmittal for a completion in the U.S. of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4), unless the International Application is being filed as a divisional, continuation or continuation-in-part application.

WARNING: Do not use this transmittal for the filing of a provisional application.

NOTE: If one of the following 3 items apply, then complete and attach **ADDED PAGES FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF A PRIOR U.S. APPLICATION CLAIMED** and a **NOTIFICATION IN PARENT APPLICATION OF THE FILING OF THIS CONTINUATION APPLICATION**.

- ☐ Divisional.
☐ Continuation.
☒ Continuation-in-part (C-I-P).

2. Benefit of Prior U.S. Application(s) (35 U.S.C. 119(e), 120, or 121)

NOTE: If the new application being transmitted is a divisional, continuation or a continuation-in-part of a parent case, or where the parent case is an International Application which designated the U.S., or benefit of a prior provisional application is claimed, then check the following item and complete and attach **ADDED PAGES FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF PRIOR U.S. APPLICATION(S) CLAIMED**.

WARNING: If an application claims the benefit of the filing date of an earlier filed application under 35 U.S.C. 120, 121 or 365(c), the 20-year term of that application will be based upon the filing date of the earliest U.S. application that the application makes reference to under 35 U.S.C. 120, 121 or 365(c). (35 U.S.C. 154(a)(2) does not take into account, for the determination of the patent term, any application on which priority is claimed under 35 U.S.C. 119, 365(a) or 365(b).) For a c-i-p application, applicant should review whether any claim in the patent that will issue is supported by an earlier application and, if not, the applicant should consider canceling the reference to the earlier filed application. The term of a patent is not based on a claim-by-claim approach. See Notice of April 14, 1995, 60 Fed. Reg. 20,195, at 20,205.

WARNING: When the last day of pendency of a provisional application falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday within the District of Columbia, any nonprovisional application claiming benefit of the provisional application must be filed prior to the Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday within the District of Columbia. See 37 C.F.R. § 1.78(a)(3).

- ☒ The new application being transmitted claims the benefit of prior U.S. application(s) and enclosed are **ADDED PAGES FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF PRIOR U.S. APPLICATION(S) CLAIMED**.

3. Papers Enclosed Which Are Required For Filing Date under 37 CFR 1.53(b) (Regular) or 37 CFR 1.153 (Design) Application

16 Pages of specification

2 Pages of claims

1 Pages of Abstract

13 Sheets of drawing

- ☐ formal
☒ informal

WARNING: DO NOT submit original drawings. A high quality copy of the drawings should be supplied when filing a patent application. The drawings that are submitted to the Office must be on strong, white, smooth, and non-shiny paper and meet the standards according to § 1.84. If corrections to the drawings are necessary, they should be made to the original drawing and a high-quality copy of the corrected original drawing then submitted to the Office. Only one copy is required or desired. Comments on proposed new 37 CFR 1.84, Notice of March 9, 1988 (1990 O.G. 57-62).

NOTE: "Identifying indicia, if provided, should include the application number or the title of the invention, inventor's name, docket number (if any), and the name and telephone number of a person to call if the Office is unable to match the drawings to the proper application. This information should be placed on the back of each sheet of drawing a minimum distance of 1.5 cm. (5/8 inch) down from the top of the page." 37 C.F.R. 1.84(c).

(complete the following, if applicable)

- ☐ The enclosed drawing(s) are photograph(s), and there is also attached a "PETITION TO ACCEPT PHOTOGRAPH(S) AS DRAWING(S)." 37 C.F.R. 1.84(b).

4. Additional papers enclosed

- ☐ Preliminary Amendment
☐ Information Disclosure Statement (37 CFR 1.98)
☐ Form PTO-1449
☐ Citations
☐ Declaration of Biological Deposit
☐ Submission of "Sequence Listing," computer readable copy and/or amendment pertaining thereto for biotechnology invention containing nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence.
☐ Authorization of Attorney(s) to Accept and Follow Instructions from Representative
☐ Special Comments
☐ Other

5. Declaration or oath

- ☐ Enclosed

Executed by (check all applicable boxes)

- ☐ inventor(s).
☐ legal representative of inventor(s).
37 CFR 1.42 or 1.43.
☐ joint inventor or person showing a proprietary interest on behalf of inventor who refused to sign or cannot be reached.

- ☐ This is the petition required by 37 CFR 1.47 and the statement required by 37 CFR 1.47 is also attached. See item 13 below for fee.

- ☒ Not Enclosed.

WARNING: Where the filing is a completion in the U.S. of an International Application, but where a declaration is not available, or where the completion of the U.S. application contains subject matter in addition to the International Application, the application may be treated as a continuation or continuation-in-part, as the case may be, utilizing ADDED PAGE FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF PRIOR U.S. APPLICATION CLAIMED.

- ☐ Application is made by a person authorized under 37 CFR 1.41(c) on behalf of all the above named inventor(s). (The declaration or oath, along with the surcharge required by 37 CFR 1.16(e) can be filed subsequently).

NOTE: It is important that all the correct inventor(s) are named for filing under 37 CFR 1.41(c) and 1.53(b).

- ☐ Showing that the filing is authorized.
(not required unless called into question. 37 CFR 1.41(d).)

(Application Transmittal [4-1]—page 3 of 8)

09334529-061649

6. Inventorship Statement

WARNING: If the named inventors are each not the inventors of all the claims an explanation, including the ownership of the various claims at the time the last claimed invention was made, should be submitted.

The inventorship for all the claims in this application are:

☒ The same.

or

☐ Are not the same. An explanation, including the ownership of the various claims at the time the last claimed invention was made,

☐ is submitted.

☐ will be submitted.

7. Language

NOTE: An application including a signed oath or declaration may be filed in a language other than English. A verified English translation of the non-English language application and the processing fee of \$130.00 required by 37 CFR 1.17(k) is required to be filed with the application, or within such time as may be set by the Office. 37 CFR 1.52(d).

NOTE: A non-English oath or declaration in the form provided or approved by the PTO need not be translated. 37 CFR 1.59(b).

☒ English

☐ Non-English

☐ The attached translation is a verified translation. 37 CFR 1.52(d).

8. Assignment

☒ An assignment of the invention to TFH Publications.

☐ is attached. A separate ☐ "COVER SHEET FOR ASSIGNMENT (DOCUMENT) ACCOMPANYING NEW PATENT APPLICATION" or ☐ FORM PTO 1595 is also attached.

☒ will follow.

NOTE: "If an assignment is submitted with a new application, send two separate letters—one for the application and one for the assignment." Notice of May 4, 1990 (1114 O.G. 77-78).

WARNING: A newly executed "CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 3.73(b)" must be filed when a continuation-in-part application is filed by an assignee. Notice of April 30, 1993, 1150 O.G. 62-64.

9. Certified Copy

Certified copy(ies) of application(s)

(country)	(appln. no.)	(filed)
(country)	(appln. no.)	(filed)
(country)	(appln. no.)	(filed)

from which priority is claimed

☐ is (are) attached.

☐ will follow.

NOTE: This item is for any foreign priority for which the application being filed directly relates. If any parent U.S. application or International Application from which this application claims benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120 is itself entitled to priority from a prior foreign application, then complete item 18 on the ADDED PAGES FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF PRIOR U.S. APPLICATION(S) CLAIMED.

A ☒ Regular application

CLAIMS AS FILED			
Number filed	Number Extra	Rate	Basic Fee 37 CFR 1.16(a) \$ 760.00
Total			
Claims (37 CFR 1.16(c)) 10 - 20 =	x	\$ 18.00	-0-
Independent			
Claims (37 CFR 1.16(b)) 1 - 3 =	x	\$ 78.00	-0-
Multiple dependent claim(s), if any (37 CFR 1.16(d))			
	+	\$260.00	-0-

- ☐ Amendment cancelling extra claims enclosed.
- ☐ Amendment deleting multiple-dependencies enclosed.
- ☐ Fee for extra claims is not being paid at this time.

Filing Fee Calculation **\$ 760.00**

Filing Fee Calculation \$_____

Filing fee calculation \$_____

11. Small Entity Statement(s)

- ☐ Verified Statement(s) that this is a filing by a small entity under 37 CFR 1.9 and 1.27 is (are) attached.

WARNING: "Status as a small entity in one application or patent does not affect any other application or patent, including applications or patents which are directly or indirectly dependent upon the application or patent in which the status has been established. A nonprovisional application claiming benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e), 120, 121 or 365(c) of a prior application may rely on a verified statement filed in the prior application if the nonprovisional application includes a reference to a verified statement in the prior application or includes a copy of the verified statement filed in the prior application if status as a small entity is still proper and desired." 37 C.F.R. § 1.28(a).

(complete the following, if applicable)

- ☐ Status as a small entity was claimed in prior application
_____ / _____, filed on _____, from which benefit
is being claimed for this application under:
35 U.S.C. ☐ 119(e),
☐ 120,
☐ 121,
☐ 365(c),

and which status as a small entity is still proper and desired.

- ☐ A copy of the verified statement in the prior application is included.

Filing Fee Calculation (50% of A, B or C above) \$ _____

NOTE: Any excess of the full fee paid will be refunded if a verified statement and a refund request are filed within 2 months of the date of timely payment of a full fee. The two-month period is not extendable under § 1.138, 37 CFR 1.28(a).

12. Request for International-Type Search (37 CFR 1.104(d))

(complete, if applicable)

- ☐ Please prepare an international-type search report for this application at the time when national examination on the merits takes place.

13. Fee Payment Being Made at This Time

- ☐ Not Enclosed
- ☐ No filing fee is to be paid at this time.
(This and the surcharge required by 37 CFR 1.16(e) can be paid subsequently.)
- ☒ Enclosed
- ☒ Basic filing fee \$ 760.00 ✓
- ☐ Recording assignment
(\$40.00; 37 CFR 1.21(h))
(See attached "COVER SHEET FOR
ASSIGNMENT ACCOMPANYING NEW
APPLICATION".) \$ _____
- ☐ Petition fee for filing by other than all the
inventors or person on behalf of the inventor
where inventor refused to sign or cannot be
reached.
(\$130.00; 37 CFR 1.47 and 1.17(h)) \$ _____

(Application Transmittal [4-1]—page 6 of 8)

09334529.061699

- ☐ For processing an application with a specification in a non-English language.
(\$130.00; 37 CFR 1.52(d) and 1.17(k)) \$ _____
- ☐ Processing and retention fee
(\$130.00; 37 CFR 1.53(d) and 1.21(f)) \$ _____
- ☐ Fee for international-type search report
(\$40.00; 37 CFR 1.21(e)) \$ _____

NOTE: 37 CFR 1.21(f) establishes a fee for processing and retaining any application that is abandoned for failing to complete the application pursuant to 37 CFR 1.53(d) and this, as well as the charges to 37 CFR 1.53 and 1.78, indicates that in order to obtain the benefit of a prior U.S. application, either the basic filing fee must be paid, or the processing and retention fee of § 1.21(f) must be paid, within 1 year from notification under § 53(d).

Total fees enclosed \$ 760.00

14. Method of Payment of Fees

- ☒ Check in the amount of \$ 760.00 ✓
- ☐ Charge Account No. _____ in the amount of \$ _____
A duplicate of this transmittal is attached.

NOTE: Fees should be itemized in such a manner that it is clear for which purpose the fees are paid. 37 CFR 1.22(b).

15. Authorization to Charge Additional Fees

WARNING: If no fees are to be paid on filing, the following items should not be completed.

WARNING: Accurately count claims, especially multiple dependent claims, to avoid unexpected high charges, if extra claim charges are authorized.

- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the following additional fees by this paper and during the entire pendency of this application to Account No. 08-1391.

☒ 37 CFR 1.16(a), (f) or (g) (filing fees)

☒ 37 CFR 1.16(b), (c) and (d) (presentation of extra claims)

NOTE: Because additional fees for excess or multiple dependent claims not paid on filing or on later presentation must only be paid or these claims cancelled by amendment prior to the expiration of the time period set for response by the PTO in any notice of fee deficiency (37 CFR 1.16(d)), it might be best not to authorize the PTO to charge additional claim fees, except possibly when dealing with amendments after final action.

☐ 37 CFR 1.16(e) (surcharge for filing the basic filing fee and/or declaration on a date later than the filing date of the application)

☐ 37 CFR 1.17 (application processing fees)

WARNING: While 37 CFR 1.17(a), (b), (c) and (d) deal with extensions of time under § 1.136(a), this authorization should be made only with the knowledge that: "Submission of the appropriate extension fee under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a) is to no avail unless a request or petition for extension is filed." (Emphasis added). Notice of November 5, 1985 (7060 O.G. 27).

☐ 37 CFR 1.18 (issue fee at or before mailing of Notice of Allowance, pursuant to 37 CFR 1.311(b))

NOTE: Where an authorization to charge the issue fee to a deposit account has been filed before the mailing of a Notice of Allowance, the issue fee will be automatically charged to the deposit account at the time of mailing the notice of allowance. 37 CFR 1.311(b).

NOTE: 37 CFR 1.28(b) requires "Notification of any change in loss of entitlement to small entity status must be filed in the application . . . prior to paying, or at the time of paying, . . . issue fee." From the wording of 37 CFR 1.28(b): (a) notification of change of status must be made even if the fee is paid as "other than a small entity" and (b) no notification is required if the change is to another small entity.

(Application Transmittal [4-1]—page 7 of 8)

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16. Instructions as to Overpayment

- ☐ Credit Account No. _____
☒ Refund

Reg. No. 35,001

Tel. No. (603) 668-1400


SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY

Steven J. Grossman

(Type or print name of attorney)

HAYES, SOLOWAY, HENNESSEY, GROSSMAN & HAGE, P.C.

P.O. Address 175 Canal Street
Manchester, NH 03101

☒ Incorporation by reference of added pages

(check the following item if the application in this transmittal claims the benefit of prior U.S. application(s) (including an international application entering the U.S. stage as a continuation, divisional or C-I-P application) and complete and attach the ADDED PAGES FOR NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF PRIOR U.S. APPLICATION(S) CLAIMED)

- ☒ Plus Added Pages for New Application Transmittal Where Benefit of Prior U.S. Application(s) Claimed

Number of pages added 5

- ☐ Plus Added Pages for Papers Referred to in Item 4 Above

Number of pages added _____

- ☐ Plus "Assignment Cover Letter Accompanying New Application"

Number of pages added _____

☐ Statement Where No Further Pages Added

(if no further pages form a part of this Transmittal, then end this Transmittal with this page and check the following item.)

- ☐ This transmittal ends with this page.

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**ADDED PAGES FOR APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL WHERE BENEFIT OF
PRIOR U.S. APPLICATION(S) CLAIMED**

NOTE: "In order for an application to claim the benefit of a prior filed copending national application, the prior application must name as an inventor at least one inventor named in the later filed application and disclose the named inventor's invention claimed in at least one claim of the later filed application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112." 37 CFR 1.78(a).

NOTE: "In addition the prior application must be (1) complete as set forth in § 1.51, or (2) entitled to a filing date as set forth in § 1.53(b) and include the basic filing fee set forth in § 1.16; or (3) entitled to a filing date as set forth in § 1.53(b) and have paid therein the processing and retention fee set forth in § 1.21(f) within the time period set forth in § 1.53(d)." 37 CFR 1.78(a).

17. Relate Back

WARNING: If an application claims the benefit of the filing date of an earlier filed application under 35 U.S.C. 120, 121 or 365(c), the 20-year term of that application will be based upon the filing date of the earliest U.S. application that the application makes reference to under 35 U.S.C. 120, 121 or 365(c). (35 U.S.C. 154(a)(2) does not take into account, for the determination of the patent term, any application on which priority is claimed under 35 U.S.C. 119, 365(a) or 365(b).) For a c-t-p application, applicant should review whether any claim in the patent that will issue is supported by an earlier application and, if not, the applicant should consider canceling the reference to the earlier filed application. The term of a patent is not based on a claim-by-claim approach. See Notice of April 14, 1995, 60 Fed. Reg. 20,195, at 20,205.

(complete the following, if applicable)

- ☒ Amend the specification by inserting, before the first line, the following sentence:
"This application claims the benefit of the following:

A. 35 U.S.C. 119(e)

NOTE: "Any nonprovisional application claiming the benefit of one or more prior filed copending provisional applications must contain or be amended to contain in the first sentence of the specification following the title a reference to each such prior provisional application, identifying it as a provisional application, and including the provisional application number (consisting of series code and serial number)." 37 C.F.R. § 1.78(a)(4).

- ☐ "U.S. Provisional Application(s) No(s).:

APPLICATION NO(S).:

FILING DATE

____ / _____
____ / _____
____ / _____

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B. 35 U.S.C. 120, 121 and 365(c)

NOTE: "Any nonprovisional application claiming the benefit of one or more prior filed copending nonprovisional applications or international applications designating the United States of America must contain or be amended to contain in the first sentence of the specification following the title a reference to each such prior application, identifying it by application number (consisting of the series code and serial number) or international application number and international filing date and indicating the relationship of the applications. Cross-references to other related applications may be made when appropriate. (See § 1.14(b))." 37 C.F.R. § 1.78(2).

- ☒ "This application is a
- ☐ continuation
 - ☒ continuation-in-part
 - ☐ divisional

of copending application(s)

- ☒ application number 0 9/ 266,389 filed on March 11, 1999
- ☐ International Application _____ filed on _____ and which designated the U.S.*

NOTE: The proper reference to a prior filed PCT application that entered the U.S. national phase is the U.S. serial number and the filing date of the PCT application that designated the U.S.

NOTE: (1) Where the application being transmitted adds subject matter to the International Application, then the filing can be as a continuation-in-part or (2) if it is desired to do so for other reasons then the filing can be as a continuation.

- ☐ "The nonprovisional application designated above, namely application _____ / _____, filed _____, claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application(s) No(s): _____

APPLICATION NO(S):

FILING DATE

_____ / _____	_____
_____ / _____	_____
_____ / _____	_____

NOTE: The deadline for entering the national phase in the U.S. for an international application was clarified in the Notice of April 28, 1987 (1079 O.G. 32 to 46) as follows:

"The Patent and Trademark Office considers the international application to be pending until the 22nd month from the priority date if the United States has been designated and no Demand for International Preliminary Examination has been filed prior to the expiration of the 19th month from the priority date and until the 32nd month from the priority date if a Demand for International Preliminary Examination which elected the United States of America has been filed prior to the expiration of the 19th month from the priority date, provided that a copy of the international application has been communicated to the Patent and Trademark Office within the 20 or 30 month period respectively. If a copy of the international application has not been communicated to the Patent and Trademark Office within the 20 or 30 month period respectively, the international application becomes abandoned as to the United States 20 or 30 months from the priority date respectively. These periods have been placed in the rules as paragraph (h) of § 1.494 and paragraph (f) of § 1.495. A continuing application under 35 U.S.C. 365(c) and 120 may be filed anytime during the pendency of the international application."

Added Pages for Application Transmittal Where Benefit of Prior U.S. Application(s) Claimed
[4-1.1]—page 2 of 5)

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18. Relate Back—35 U.S.C. 119 Priority Claim for Prior Application

The prior U.S. application(s), including any prior International Application designating the U.S., identified above in item 17B, in turn itself claim(s) foreign priority(ies) as follows:

country	appln. no.	filed on
---------	------------	----------

The certified copy(ies) has (have)

☐ been filed on _____ in prior application 0 / _____ which was filed on _____

☐ is (are) attached.

WARNING: The certified copy of the priority application that may have been communicated to the PTO by the International Bureau may not be relied on without any need to file a certified copy of the priority application in the continuing application. This is so because the certified copy of the priority application communicated by the International Bureau is placed in a folder and is not assigned a U.S. serial number unless the national stage is entered. Such folders are disposed of if the national stage is not entered. Therefore, such certified copies may not be available if needed later in the prosecution of a continuing applica. An alternative would be to physically remove the priority documents from the folders and transfer them to the continuing application. The resources required to request transfer, retrieve the folders, make suitable record notations, transfer the certified copies, enter and make a record of such copies in the Continuing Application are substantial. Accordingly, the priority documents in folders of International applications that have not entered the national stage may not be relied on. Notice of April 28, 1987 (1079 O.G. 32 to 46).

19. Maintenance of Copendency of Prior Application

NOTE: The PTO finds it useful if a copy of the petition filed in the prior application extending the term for response is filed with the papers constituting the filing of the continuation application. Notice of November 5, 1985 (1060 O.G. 27).

A. ☐ Extension of time in prior application

(This item must be completed and the papers filed in the prior application if the period set in the prior application has run.)

☐ A petition, fee and response extends the term in the pending prior application until _____

☐ A copy of the petition filed in prior application is attached.

B. ☐ Conditional Petition for Extension of Time in Prior Application

(complete this item if previous item not applicable)

☐ A conditional petition for extension of time is being filed in the pending prior application.

☐ A copy of the conditional petition filed in the prior application is attached

Added Pages for Application Transmittal Where Benefit of Prior U.S. Application(s) Claimed
[4-1.1]—page 3 of 6)

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20. Further Inventorship Statement Where Benefit of Prior Application(s) Claimed

NOTE: "If the continuation, continuation-in-part, or divisional application is filed by less than all the inventors named in the prior application a statement must accompany the application when filed requesting deletion of the names of the person or persons who are not inventors of the invention being claimed in the continuation, continuation-in-part, or divisional application." 37 CFR 1.62(a) (emphasis added). (dealing with the file wrapper continuation situation).

NOTE: "In the case of a continuation-in-part application which adds and claims additional disclosure by amendment, an oath or declaration as required by § 1.63 must be filed. In those situations where a new oath or declaration is required due to additional subject matter being claimed, additional inventors may be named in the continuing application. In a continuation or divisional application which discloses and claims only subject matter disclosed in a prior application, no additional oath or declaration is required and the application must name as inventors the same or less than all the inventors in the prior application." 37 CFR 1.60(c) (dealing with the continuation situation).

(complete applicable item (a), (b) and/or (c) below)

- (a) ☐ This application discloses and claims only subject matter disclosed in the prior application whose particulars are set out above and the inventor(s) in this application are
- ☐ the same.
 - ☐ less than those named in the prior application. It is requested that the following inventor(s) identified for the prior application be deleted:

(type name(s) of inventor(s) to be deleted)

- (b) ☒ This application discloses and claims additional disclosure by amendment and a new declaration or oath is being filed. With respect to the prior application, the inventor(s) in this application are
- ☒ the same.
 - ☐ the following additional inventor(s) have been added:

(type name(s) of inventor(s) to be added)

- (c) ☒ The inventorship for all the claims in this application are
- ☒ the same.
 - ☐ not the same. An explanation, including the ownership of the various claims at the time the last claimed invention was made
- ☐ is submitted.
 - ☐ will be submitted.

Added Pages for Application Transmittal Where Benefit of Prior U.S. Application(s) Claimed
[4-1.1]—page 4 of 5

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21. Abandonment of Prior Application (if applicable)

- ☐ Please abandon the prior application at a time while the prior application is pending, or when the petition for extension of time or to revive in that application is granted, and when this application is granted a filing date, so as to make this application copending with said prior application.

NOTE: According to the Notice of May 13, 1983 (TMOG 6-7), the filing of a continuation or continuation-in-part application is a proper response with respect to a petition for extension of time or a petition to revive and should include the express abandonment of the prior application conditioned upon the granting of the petition and the granting of a filing date to the continuing application.

22. Petition for Suspension of Prosecution for the Time Necessary to File an Amendment

WARNING: "The claims of a new application may be finally rejected in the first Office action in those situations where (1) the new application is a continuing application of, or a substitute for, an earlier application, and (2) all the claims of the new application (a) are drawn to the same invention claimed in the earlier application, and (b) would have been properly finally rejected on the grounds of art of record in the next Office action if they had been entered in the earlier application." MPEP, § 706.07(b).

NOTE: Where it is possible that the claims on file will give rise to a first action final for this continuation application and for some reason an amendment cannot be filed promptly (e.g., experimental data is being gathered) it may be desirable to file a petition for suspension of prosecution for the time necessary.

(check the next item, if applicable)

- ☐ There is provided herewith a Petition To Suspend Prosecution for the Time Necessary to File An Amendment (New Application Filed Concurrently)

23. Small Entity (37 CFR § 1.28(a))

- ☐ Applicant has established small entity status by the filing of a verified statement in parent application / _____ on _____.
- ☐ A copy of the verified statement previously filed is included.

WARNING: "Status as a small entity in one application or patent does not affect any other application or patent, including applications or patents which are directly or indirectly dependent upon the application or patent in which the status has been established. Applications filed as continuations, divisions or continuations-in-part of a parent application must include a reference to a verified statement filed in the parent application if status as a small entity is still proper and desired." 37 CFR § 1.28(a).

24. NOTIFICATION IN PARENT APPLICATION OF THIS FILING

- ☒ A notification of the filing of this
(check one of the following)

- ☐ continuation
☒ continuation-in-part
☐ divisional

is being filed in the parent application, from which this application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 120.

Attorney's Docket No. TFH 99.04

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of: Axelrod

Serial No.: 0 9/ 266,389

Group No.: 3643

Filed: March 11, 1999

Examiner: S. Nguyen

For: Pet Carrier

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

**NOTIFICATION OF FILING OF CONTINUING OR DIVISIONAL
APPLICATION**

Notification is hereby being made of the filing of a:

- ☐ continuation
☒ continuation-in-part
☐ divisional

application for this case

- ☒ concurrently herewith
☐ on _____

(date)

Reg. No. 35,001

Tel. No.: (603) 668-1400


SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY

Steven J. Grossman

(type or print name of attorney)

HAYES, SOLOWAY, HENNESSEY, GROSSMAN & HAGE, P.C.

(P.O. Address)

175 Canal Street

Manchester, NH 03101

CERTIFICATION UNDER 37 CFR 1.8(a) and 1.10

I hereby certify that, on the date shown below, this correspondence is being:

MAILING

☒ deposited with the United States Postal Service in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231

37 CFR 1.8(a)

37 CFR 1.10

☐ with sufficient postage as first class mail.

☒ as "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee"

Mailing Label No. EM243580002US

TRANSMISSION

☐ transmitted by facsimile to the Patent and Trademark Office.


Signature

Kristine Stevens

June 16, 1999

(type or print name of person certifying)

Notification of Filing of Continuing or Divisional Application [4-9]

00334529.061644

1 PET CARRIER

2 CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

3 This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application No.
4 09/266,389, filed March 11, 1999.

5 FIELD OF INVENTION

6 This invention relates in general to a pet carrier transportation device and
7 in particular to a collapsible/foldable pet carrier or portable structure that absorbs
8 or isolates liquid waste that may be present in the carrier and which carrier design
9 further provides a more sanitary condition for the pet when in transport.

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

11 A variety of pet carriers have been reported in the prior art, all aimed in
12 one form or another to facilitate pet transportation. Specifically, pet carriers are
13 commonly used by pet owners for carrying their pets on trips or as a means for
14 containing the pets when the pets are shipped from one point to another. Pet
15 carriers also commonly double as sleeping quarters for the pet as the owner may
16 contain the pet overnight to prevent the pet from wandering and potentially
17 damaging the home or hotel room in which the owner is occupying.

18 There are, however, some shortcomings inherent to common pet carriers.
19 During transport, the pet will require food and water and periodically will need to
20 relieve its bodily functions. In addition, the food and water itself, which are
21 placed in the pet carrier, may be overturned by the pet or by carrier movement
22 during transportation. Accordingly, in either case, the pet carriers to date have

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1 been inadequate in their ability to efficiently deal with such problems and to
2 provide the pet with a stable hygienic environment.

3 For example, some common pet carriers currently available have been
4 advertised in the "R.C. Steele Wholesale Pet Supply Catalog", Brockport, New
5 York, which illustrates "Dorskocil Kennels" as a lightweight, portable kennel
6 designed for safe transportation. Also shown is the "Vari-Kennel" design that
7 contains what is described as a "dial latch system" for ease of assembly.
8 However, neither of these designs display any aspect of how to preserve a sanitary
9 condition in the specific carrier should the animal be forced to relieve itself.

10 More specifically, reviewing the patent literature begins with U.S. Patent
11 No. 5,769,028, entitled "Pet Carrier" which discloses a carrier including a main
12 unit and an insert unit. The main unit defines a carrying space having a closed
13 bottom and four sides, one of which has an opening therethrough large enough to
14 permit an animal to enter the space through the opening, and the insert unit has a
15 closed top, four sides, and an open bottom. After the animal has entered the main
16 unit, the insert unit is lowered down into the main unit to close off the side
17 opening. Then a foldable top closure for the main unit is folded to secure the
18 carrier and form a handle structure for carrying the carrier. Both units are
19 foldable and are structured to provide an enhanced strength carrier.

20 U.S. Patent No. 5,503,107 entitled "Pet Carrier" discloses a container for
21 manually transporting a pet having a litter box, food container and water container
22 therein and sliding doors accessible from the exterior of the container for
23 selectively closing the litter box, food container and water container to prevent

1 inadvertent spillage. The container may also include a single compartment or two
2 detachably connected compartments in order that a liter box compartment may be
3 selectively separated from a food and water compartment. Detachable handles are
4 provided in order that each separate compartment of the dual compartment
5 embodiment may be carried separately or as a unified compartment.

6 U.S. Patent No. 5,839,392, entitled "Pet Carrier" discloses a corrugated
7 plastic pet carrier with two side panels. A side panel fold line extends between
8 the base panel and each side panel. In addition, a diagonal fold line is said to
9 extend from each corner of the base panel to a first median fold line for collapsing
10 the base panel, side panels and end panels inwardly for collapsing the container
11 from an erect position to a collapsed, generally flat position, and back to an erect
12 position.

13 U.S. Patent No. 5,671,698 entitled "Pet Carrier" discloses a pet housing
14 having a rigid bottom panel enclosed in a bottom cover which is attached to a
15 plastic mesh which is shaped to form the pet carrier sides and top. The plastic
16 mesh is attached to inverted U shaped rigid frame members which hold the shape
17 of the sides and top as well as provide structural support to protect the pet being
18 transported. The pet carrier has a rear end panel and door of plastic mesh to
19 complete the enclosure. There is a provision for a tray and absorbent pad in the
20 bottom of the pet carrier for hygiene as well as a cover to protect the pet from the
21 environment.

22 U.S. Patent No. 5,133,294, entitled "Pet Carrier for Vehicles" discloses a
23 pet carrier for use in a vehicle comprising a platform sized to generally fit on the

1 passenger seat. Front, rear and side panels are pivotally connected to the platform
2 for movement between generally horizontal positions and upright positions
3 wherein they form a pet enclosure upstanding from the platform.

4 Finally, attention is directed to U.S. Patent No. 5,715,772 entitled "Pet
5 Carrier Absorbent Pad" which discloses an absorbent pad designed to be used
6 with pet carriers to absorb liquids that may be present. Specifically, the pad is
7 said to contain an absorbent layer having first and second sides, a first single
8 direction moisture conveyor positioned proximate to at least one side of the
9 absorbent layer for allowing moisture to pass toward the absorbent layer and for
10 resisting passage of moisture out of said absorbent layer. A second single
11 direction moisture conveyor is positioned proximate to said second side of said
12 absorbent layer, wherein the first and second direction moisture conveyors are
13 oriented about said absorbent layer so that moisture travels across said moisture
14 conveyors only toward said absorbent layer.

15 As can be seen from the above review of the art, although certain pet
16 carrier designs have been disclosed which are collapsible, and although absorbent
17 pads of certain construction are known, there remains an on-going demand for a
18 pet carrier design which more efficiently deals with liquid waste build-up, and
19 which also collapses into a substantially flat configuration for ease of
20 storage/transportation when not in use. Stated another way, pet carriers to date
21 have shown themselves to be relatively bulky and heavy thereby failing to provide
22 a simple, lightweight and portable pet carrier which provides both comfort and

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1 good hygiene for the pet, and also provides a safe/sturdy structure for protection
2 during transport.

3 Accordingly, it is a general object of this invention to provide a pet carrier
4 that is conveniently collapsible for storage, and which provides both the pet and
5 the pet owner with a advantageous method to deal with the liquid animal waste
6 that will occur in the carrier over extended periods of time.

7 More specifically, it is also an object of this invention to provide a pet
8 carrier design that allows for ease of cleaning of animal waste, and which isolates
9 the animal from the liquid waste when the pet is forced to remain in the carrier
10 after relieving itself.

11 Finally, it is also an object of this invention to provide a more humane
12 method of transporting pets. That is, it is an object of the invention herein to
13 provide a pet carrier construction wherein the pet can be provided with essential
14 liquid nourishment when in transport without fear of the pet becoming exposed to
15 unsanitary and unhealthy conditions due to the evolution of a soiled environment.

16 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

17 A pet carrier/portable structure for containing a pet comprising a bottom
18 panel, a tray placed within said bottom panel which tray is removable therefrom,
19 including a top panel, a left panel, a right panel and a first end panel and a second
20 end panel. The first and second end panel are releasably engaged to said carrier
21 and the left and right panels each comprise an upper and lower section hingedly
22 connected to one another so as to collapse the left and right panels inwardly into
23 said pet carrier. The tray further comprises screen material which screen material

1 allows for passage of liquid into said tray and which screen material also supports
2 the pet above said liquid.

3

4

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5 FIG. 1 illustrates a perspective view of one preferred embodiment pet
6 carrier/portable structure design.

7 FIG. 2 illustrates a perspective view of the pet carrier removable tray.

8 FIG. 3 illustrates a front perspective view of a preferred pet carrier design.

9 FIG. 4 illustrates a side perspective view of a preferred pet carrier design
10 in partially collapsed configuration.

11 FIG. 5 illustrates a front perspective view of a preferred pet carrier design
12 in partially collapsed configuration.

13 FIG. 6 illustrates a front perspective view of the preferred pet carrier
14 design in a fully collapsed configuration.

15 FIG. 7 illustrates yet another preferred embodiment of the present
16 invention is which a perforated removable tray is supported by ribbed supports on
17 the bottom of the pet carrier/portable habitat.

18 FIG. 8 provides a plan view of the pet carrier/portable habitat of FIG. 7.

19 FIGS. 9 and 10 provide alternative front sectional view of the pet
20 carrier/portable habitat of FIG. 7.

21 FIG. 11 provides a more detailed side sectional view of the front door
22 section of the pet carrier/portable habitat.

1 FIG. 12 is yet another front sectional view, illustrating the optional use of
2 food and water dispensers.

3 FIG. 13 is a side sectional view of the pet carrier/portable habitat of FIG.
4 7.

5 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

6 A preferred pet carrier/portable structure design in accordance with the
7 present invention is illustrated in FIG. 1. As shown therein, the pet carrier 10
8 contains a bottom panel 12 and tray 14 removably placed on the bottom panel, a
9 top panel 16, a left panel 18, a right panel 20 and a first end panel 22 containing a
10 screen door section 24. In addition, the carrier contains a folding handle 26 which
11 rests within recess 28. Also shown about the carrier 10 are air holes 30. As
12 shown in FIG. 1, the first end panel 22 is hingedly attached to bottom panel 12 so
13 that end panel 22 can be readily made to collapse inwardly into carrier 10. In a
14 similar manner, carrier 10 also preferably contains a second end panel (not
15 shown) at the rear of the carrier that is also hingedly attached to the bottom panel
16 12 so that it too can be made to collapse inwardly into the carrier 10 when the
17 carrier 10 is not in use.

18 With attention directed at both FIGS. 1 and 2, the tray 14 is shown to have
19 a screen material 32 which screen material preferably rests on top of the tray 14.
20 The screen material 32 therefore conveniently allows for passage of liquid into the
21 tray but also simultaneously supports the pet above any liquid passing into tray
22 14, thereby providing an improved sanitary condition for the pet over extended
23 periods of time.

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1 In that regard, screen 32 is preferably constructed from a double layer of
2 screen material. That is, screen 32 preferably contains a top layer of fine
3 mesh/screen material to allow for both fluid passage while preventing a paw or
4 nail of the animal from falling therethrough and becoming dangerously affixed to
5 said mesh/screen material. Accordingly, such upper layer of mesh/screen material
6 is preferably made close enough in opening to be comfortable for the animal to
7 walk upon when the animal is placed within the carrier. This upper layer of fine
8 mesh is then placed upon a lower structural grid screen which is therein designed
9 to support the animal's weight. With respect to this preferred use of a double
10 layer of screen material, it has been found that the top layer is preferably of mesh
11 size or sieve size No. 400 to about 0.25 (nominal opening of 0.0015 to 0.250 inch
12 as noted in the "Handbook of Chemistry and Physics CRC, 58th Edition, Standard
13 Test Sieves-Wire Cloth") and can be made from plastic or metallic type
14 screen/mesh material. At such screen/mesh size, and as noted, the mesh will
15 conveniently allow for passage of liquids, which of course include liquids spilled
16 by the animal and/or liquid waste produced by the animal if forced to urinate in
17 the carrier. The lower structural layer can then be readily fabricated from larger
18 and heavier mesh/screen size material, such as, e.g., mesh size of greater than
19 about 0.25 inch to, e.g., 5 inch, which corresponds to a nominal opening of 0.25
20 inch to 5 inches. The lower structural layer has as its purpose to support the load
21 of the animal, while again, allowing for fluid passage.

22 Alternatively, those skilled in the art will appreciate that screen 32 can be
23 made of a simple monolayer type screen/mesh construction, which monolayer

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1 similarly achieves the goal of allowing for fluid passage and acts to prevent a paw
2 or nail from falling through and becoming lodged therein, which could cause
3 injury to the animal. However, if monolayer construction is the choice, the
4 monolayer itself must be made sufficiently strong/rigid to support the animal's
5 weight contained therein. In that regard, it has been found suitable to use a
6 monolayer type screen/mesh material of a mesh size for positioning on tray 14 so
7 that tray 14 acts to collect liquid or liquid waste and simultaneously supports the
8 animal above such captured liquids. In that regard, the mesh size can again be
9 preferably made in the range of mesh size No. 400 to 0.25. However, this is only
10 a preferred range, and as noted above, the selection of mesh size is done to
11 accommodate passage of fluids and to prevent injury to the animal by preventing
12 the animal's paw or nail from becoming trapped.

13 FIG 3 shows a front perspective view of the carrier 10. As illustrated
14 therein, the screen door section 24 is preferably hinged at 34 to the end panel 22
15 and also preferably contains a latch 36. As also shown in FIG. 3, the tray 14 rests
16 in the bottom panel 12, and the folding handle is again shown at 26.

17 Attention is next directed to FIG. 4, which provides a side perspective
18 view of a preferred pet carrier design in partially collapsed configuration. As seen
19 therein, first end panel 22 containing screen door 24 is hingedly collapsed
20 inwardly into the pet carrier. Similarly, second end panel 38 is hingedly collapsed
21 into the pet carrier, which collapsing first end panel 22 and second end panel 38
22 initiates the folding of the carrier into a substantially flat construction for ease of

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1 storage. Also, as shown in this particular preferred embodiment, end panel 38 is
2 hingedly connected to bottom panel 12.

3 However, while FIG. 4 illustrates the preferred configuration herein
4 where the first end panel 22 and second end panel 38 are hingedly connected to
5 the bottom panel 12, it will be appreciated that end panels 22 and 38 can simply
6 be made so that they are releasably engaged to the pet carrier, e.g., by a
7 mechanical attachment such as a snap-fit or wing-nuts with quick release. In that
8 manner the end panels can be easily released/removed from the pet carrier and/or
9 placed within the pet carrier for the purposes of shipping/storage.

10 FIG. 5 illustrates a front perspective view of a preferred pet carrier design
11 in partially collapsed configuration. As shown therein, the panels 18 or 20 are
12 both hingedly connected at 40 to top panel 16. In addition, a hinged connection is
13 shown at 42 and a further hinge connection is placed at 44, which connection 44
14 connects the panels 18 and 20 to the bottom section 44. As shown in FIG. 5, such
15 strategic placement of hinges 40, 42 and 44 allows for the panels 18 and 20 to
16 collapse downwardly into a substantially flat collapsed configuration, as shown in
17 FIG. 6. That is, with attention to FIG. 6, handle 26 is made to rest in a recess in
18 the top panel 16, panels 18 and 20 are in a fully collapsed state, as well as panels
19 22 and 38. In this collapsed state, it can be seen that tray 14 still conveniently
20 rests within bottom panel 14. Accordingly, it can be appreciated that in the
21 collapsed state shown in FIG. 6, the pet carrier design herein can be conveniently
22 stored or transported for further use.

1 Finally, with attention again directed at FIG. 5, as illustrated therein,
2 hinge connections 40, 42 and 44 are arranged such that panels 18 and 20 collapse
3 inwardly into the carrier. That being the case, the hinge 40 is preferably hinged
4 so that the hinge itself is positioned on the inside surface of panels 18 and 20; i.e.,
5 the hinge is inside the carrier as shown in FIG. 5. Hinge connection 42, as also
6 shown in FIG. 5, is itself positioned on the outside surface of panels 18 and 20,
7 and finally, hinge 44 is preferably designed so that the hinge is connected to the
8 inside surface of panels 18 and 20. Such positioning of the hinge connections 40,
9 42 and 44 thereby facilitate the collapse of the panels 18 and 20, downwardly,
10 into the substantially flat configuration shown in FIG. 6.

11 In addition to the collapsing features noted above, attention is drawn to
12 U.S. Application Serial No. 09/255,117 filed February 22, 1999 entitled "Foldable
13 Collapsible Structure", commonly owned by the assignee herein, and whose
14 teachings are incorporated by reference. Specifically, as disclosed therein, a
15 collapsible/foldable structure is disclosed comprising a top roof and a bottom
16 platform defining a top and bottom of said structure; front and rear collapsible
17 walls each pivotally attached to said bottom platform to provide for pivotable
18 collapse of said front and rear walls; a pair of sidewalls each pivotally attached to
19 said roof to facilitate inward collapse of said sidewalls when said sidewalls are
20 pivoted toward said bottom platform, said sidewalls further containing an upper,
21 middle and lower sections, wherein said upper and middle sections are pivotally
22 attached to one another and said middle and lower section are also pivotally
23 attached to one another so that said upper and middle sidewall sections can be

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1 pivoted inwardly towards said bottom platform; and wherein said top roof section
2 further comprises two roof sections pivotally attached to one another at about the
3 mid-point of said roof section, so that said two roof sections can collapse
4 downwardly along said pivotable attachment toward said bottom platform.

5 Accordingly, in optional embodiment, the left panel 18 and right panel 20
6 as disclosed herein can be made to contain an upper, middle and lower sections,
7 wherein said upper and middle sections are pivotally or hingedly attached to one
8 another and said middle and lower section are also pivotally or hingedly attached
9 to one another so that said upper and middle panel sections can be pivoted or
10 hinged inwardly towards said bottom panel 12.

11 On that note, hinges 40, 42, and 44, as shown in FIG. 5, may comprise an
12 add-on standard mechanical type plastic or metallic hinge construction, and can
13 therefore be of sufficient number (running along the length of the structure) to
14 effectuate the foldable/collapsible mechanism herein described. Alternatively,
15 said hinges can also run the entire length of the structure, and be made of a
16 polyolefin (polypropylene), which therefore provides living-hinge characteristics
17 to the present invention. The living hinge can be either a non-integral feature of
18 the panels (i.e. an add-on), or, in alternative embodiment, can be made integral to
19 said panels, in which case the hinge would be contiguous with the outer surface of
20 the panels 18 and 20.

21 Optionally, tray 14 can be made to contain an absorbent pad, for purposes
22 of soaking up any liquid spilled by the animal, or liquid waste should the animal
23 be forced to relieve itself when contained within the carrier. In addition, as

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1 illustrated in FIG. 6, the tray 12 also preferably contains a recess at 46 which
2 conveniently provides a location for the consumer to hold onto the tray and
3 remove the tray from the carrier for any necessary cleaning.

4 With regards to the preferred materials of construction, it is to be noted
5 herein that the pet carrier panels are themselves preferably manufactured of
6 panels made of a plastic outer layer with a polyurethane foam core. Such
7 construction provides excellent thermal insulation, as well as light-weight and
8 durability for ease of transport. The plastic outer layer, as previously noted
9 above, can then be preferably made from a polyethylene or polypropylene resin,
10 to thereby provide a flexible film outer layer for the purposes of forming the
11 above noted hinge sections 40, 42 and 44. In that regard, a polypropylene film
12 would provide the aforementioned living hinge structure while being integral to
13 the outer plastic layer of the carrier panels.

14 With regard to yet another preferred embodiment of the present invention,
15 attention is directed to FIG. 7, which again illustrates the pet carrier/portable
16 habitat 10 which bottom panel therein 12 contains support structures 48 attached
17 thereto. In addition, a perforated removable tray 50, made of plastic, is shown
18 and which is configured to rest upon support structures 48 at the bottom of the
19 habitat 10. Optionally, the support structures can be part of the tray 50. In
20 addition, the support structures 48 can be either integral with the bottom section,
21 or a separate lift-out component.

22 As specifically shown, support structures 48 are preferably a ribbed
23 design, of which a plurality preferably extend, as shown in FIG. 8, from the edge

1 of the bottom section into the carrier and extend towards a circular recessed area
 2 52 in the bottom section 12. The circular recessed area 52 thereby acts as a built-
 3 in collection locatoin for any liquid waste produced by the animal. Accordingly,
 4 within the circular recessed area 52 it will be preferable at times to include an
 5 absorbent collection pad.

6 It is also to be noted that the various structural sections of the present
 7 invention, such as bottom section 12, as well as panels 16, 18 and 20, are
 8 preferably manufactured by a process of blow molding, which provides both an
 9 inner and outer wall structure (twin-wall construction) to the portable habitat
 10 herein. Such twin wall construction is best shown at 54 in FIG. 9, which
 11 illustrates a front sectional view of the portable habitat. In that regard, such blow
 12 molded wall construction provides a much safer environment for the pet, as any
 13 impact against the outer wall will be better absorbed in such blow molded wall
 14 construction as opposed to a single type wall configuration. In addition, such
 15 inner and outer wall construction conveniently allows for the optional use of
 16 insulating foam material, which would provide better regulation and temperature
 17 control inside the portable habitat when in transit, or exposed to severe
 18 temperature fluctuations.

19 Also shown in FIG. 9 is the folding handle 26, and hinges 40, 42 and 44,
 20 which as previously noted, can assume either a mechanical or living-type
 21 membrane hinge configuration. For example, in a particular preferred design,
 22 hinges 40 and 42 are both of the living type or membrane hinge type variety, and
 23 hinge 44 can be a mechanical or piano type hinge design. Also better illustrated

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1 in FIG. 9 is the feature that the bottom section 12 contains a downwardly sloping
2 surface 56 which again facilitates the flow of waste fluid toward the circular
3 recessed area 52 which as illustrated in FIG. 9 to contain an absorbent pad.
4 Finally, the removable tray 50 is shown in cross-section along with the general
5 location of the ribbed supports 48.

6 Attention is next directed to FIG. 10, which is yet another front sectional
7 view of the portable habitat, illustrating the use of a preferred metallic/chrome
8 wire door 58. In addition, as further illustrated in FIG. 10, the door 58 contains a
9 spring loaded pin release 60 along with pins at 62 and 64, thereby releasably
10 engaging door 58 to the portable habitat structure at either a left or right location.
11 With attention directed at FIG. 11, a more detailed sectional view is provided of
12 the pins 62 and 64. It is therefore worth noting that by making the door 58
13 entirely releasable from the habitat, different doors can be employed which are
14 more suitable for the particular animal at issue. For example, in the case of a bird,
15 a small perch can be fitted to the door structure. In addition, as noted, the door 58
16 can be made to open and hinge either in a left or right direction.

17 Attention is also directed to FIG. 12, which illustrates the optional use of
18 food and water dispensers 66 and 68 in the door 58. In accordance with the
19 present invention, as the animal can relieve itself without itself having to remain
20 in contact with its liquid waste, the pet owner can more humanely provide the
21 animal with liquid nourishment during prolonged travel periods. Finally,
22 attention is also directed to FIG. 13, which provides a side sectional view of the
23 portable habitat herein. As best shown in FIG. 13, a space is provided at 70 for

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1 accommodating the front door 58 when in collapsed configuration. In addition,
2 illustrated end panel 38 which contains holes 72 is itself hinged at 74 for
3 collapsing into the pet habitat.

4 Alternatively, it should again be appreciated that end panels 22 and 38,
5 while preferably hingedly connected to the portable habitat for folding therein,
6 may optionally be fully releasable for both removal and/or placement within the
7 habitat during shipping and storage.

8 Although this invention has been disclosed and illustrated with reference
9 to particular embodiments, the principles involved are susceptible for use in
10 numerous other embodiments which will be apparent to persons of ordinary skill
11 in the art. The invention is, therefore, to be limited only as indicated by the scope
12 of the appended claims.

1 What is claimed is:

2 1. A portable habitat structure for containing a pet comprising:

3 a bottom panel containing a floor surface sloped downwardly and
4 inwardly to a recessed section in said floor surface, a perforated tray removably
5 placed within said bottom panel, including a top panel, first and second side
6 panels, a first end panel and a second end panel;

7 said first end panel and second end panel hingedly attached to said pet
8 carrier to collapse inwardly into said pet carrier and wherein said first and second
9 side panels are hingedly attached to said top and bottom panels;

10 said first and second side panels each comprising upper and lower sections
11 hingedly connected to one another so as to collapse said first and second side
12 panels inwardly into said habitat;

13 said perforated removable tray containing openings to allow for passage of
14 liquid onto said sloped surface of said bottom panel, including supports positioned
15 between said tray and said sloped surface of said bottom panel to maintain said
16 tray above said floor surface of said bottom section.

17 2. The habitat of claim 1, wherein said supports positioned between said
18 tray and said bottom panel comprise ribbed supports projecting upward from said
19 floor surface of said bottom section, said ribbed supports integral to said bottom
20 section, said ribbed supports maintaining said perforated removable tray in
21 substantially horizontal position above said inwardly sloped floor surface.

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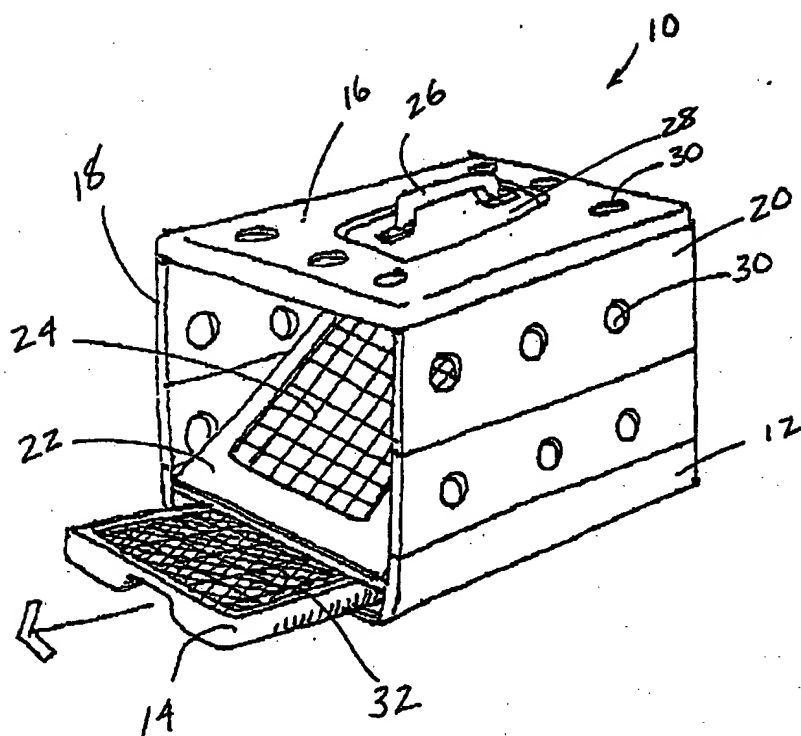
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- 1 3. The habitat of claim 1, wherein said first end panel comprises a
2 metallic wire door releasably engaged to said habitat to allow for ingress and
3 egress of an animal.
- 4 4. The habitat of claim 1 wherein said panels comprise twin wall
5 construction.
- 6 5. The habitat of claim 4 wherein said twin wall construction is made
7 of plastic.
- 8 6. The habitat of claim 1 wherein said recessed section of said habitat
9 comprises an absorbent pad for the absorption of liquid.
- 10 7. The habitat of claim 1, wherein said top panel contains a folding handle
11 and said top panel further contains a recess for receiving said handle.
- 12 8. The habitat of claim 1 wherein said perforated removable tray is
13 made of plastic.
- 14 9. The habitat of claim 3 wherein said wire door releasably engage to
15 said habitat can open in either a left or right direction.
- 16 10. The habitat of claim 1 wherein said top panel, first and second side
17 panels, and first and second end panels containing openings for air flow.

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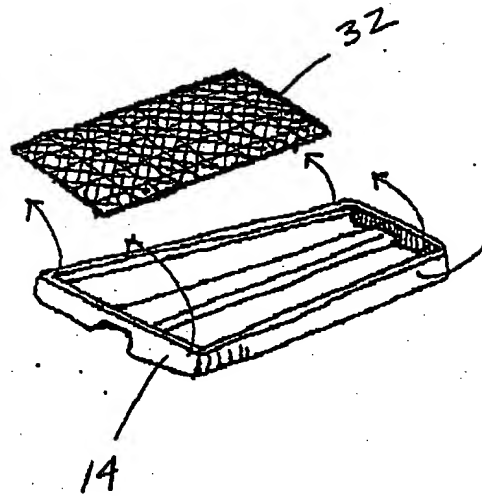
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FIG. 1



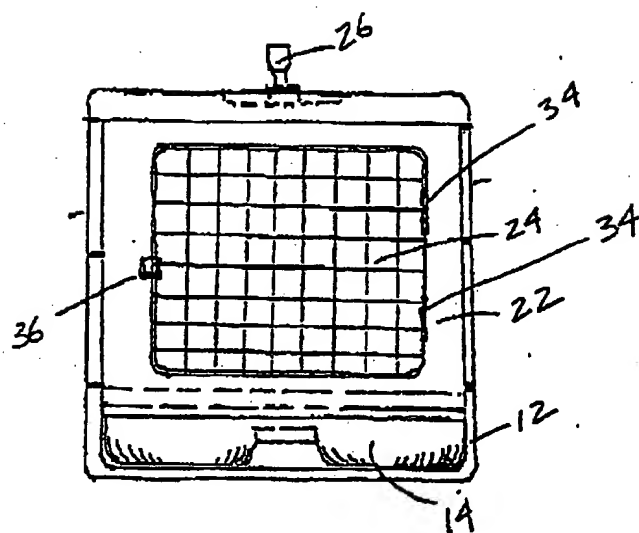
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FIG. 2



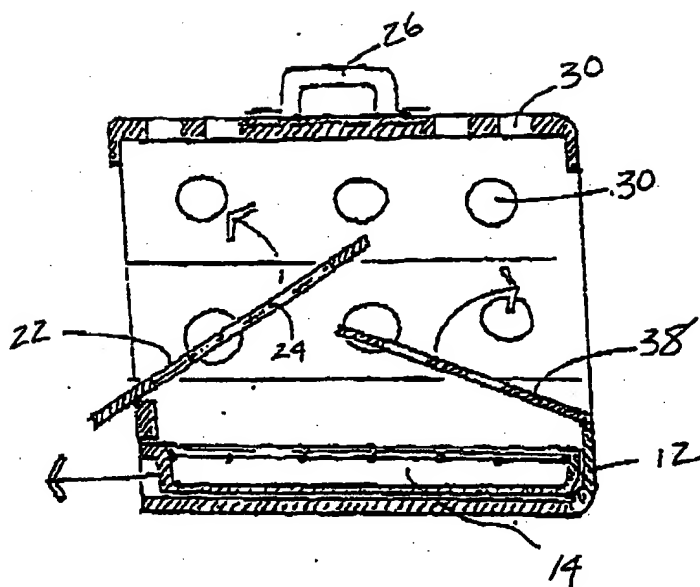
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FIG. 3



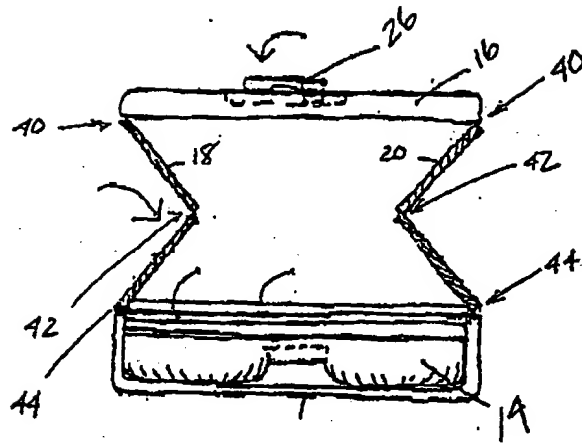
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FIG. 4



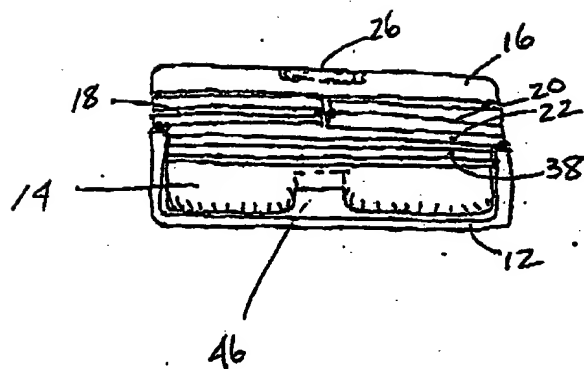
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FIG. 5



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FIG. 6



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FIG. 7

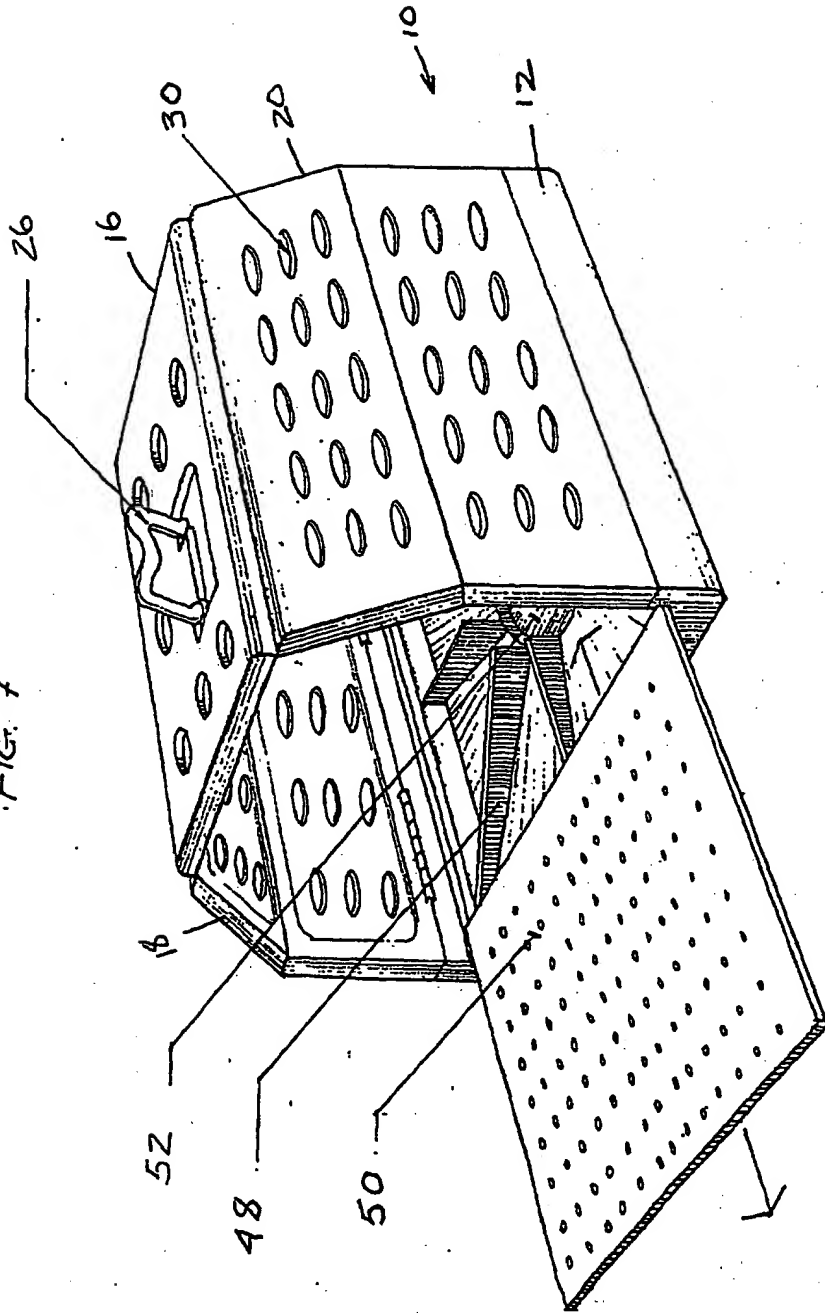
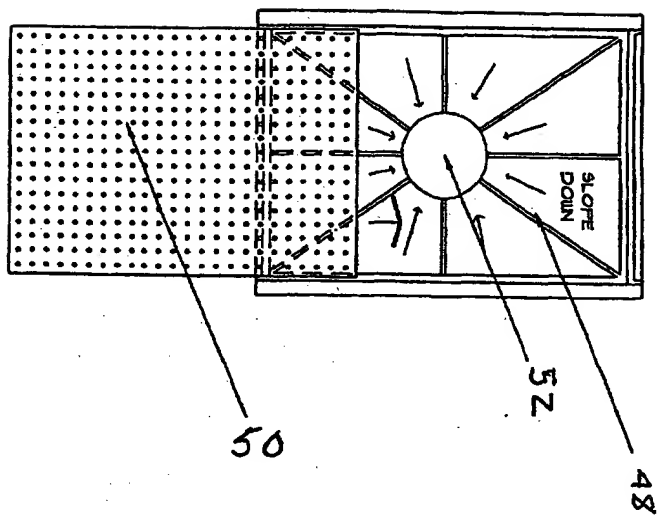
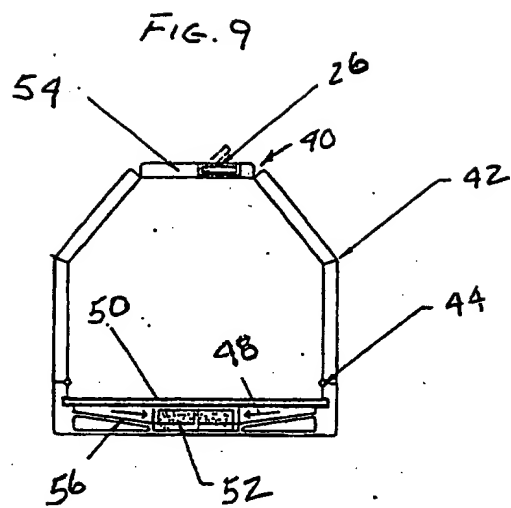


FIG. 8



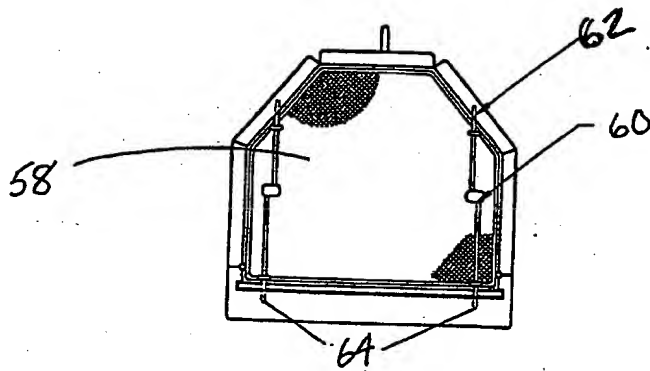
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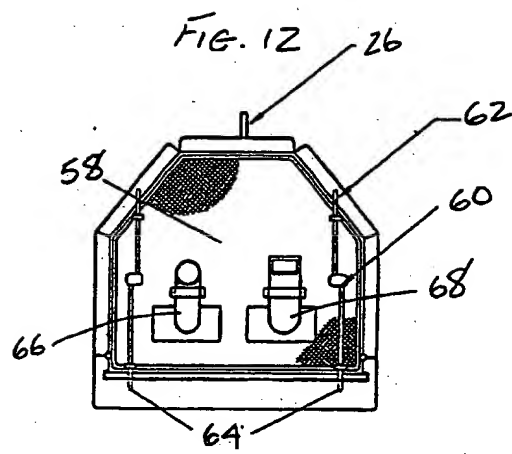


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FIG. 10

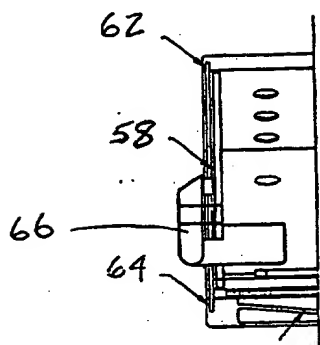


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FIG. 11



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FIG. 13

